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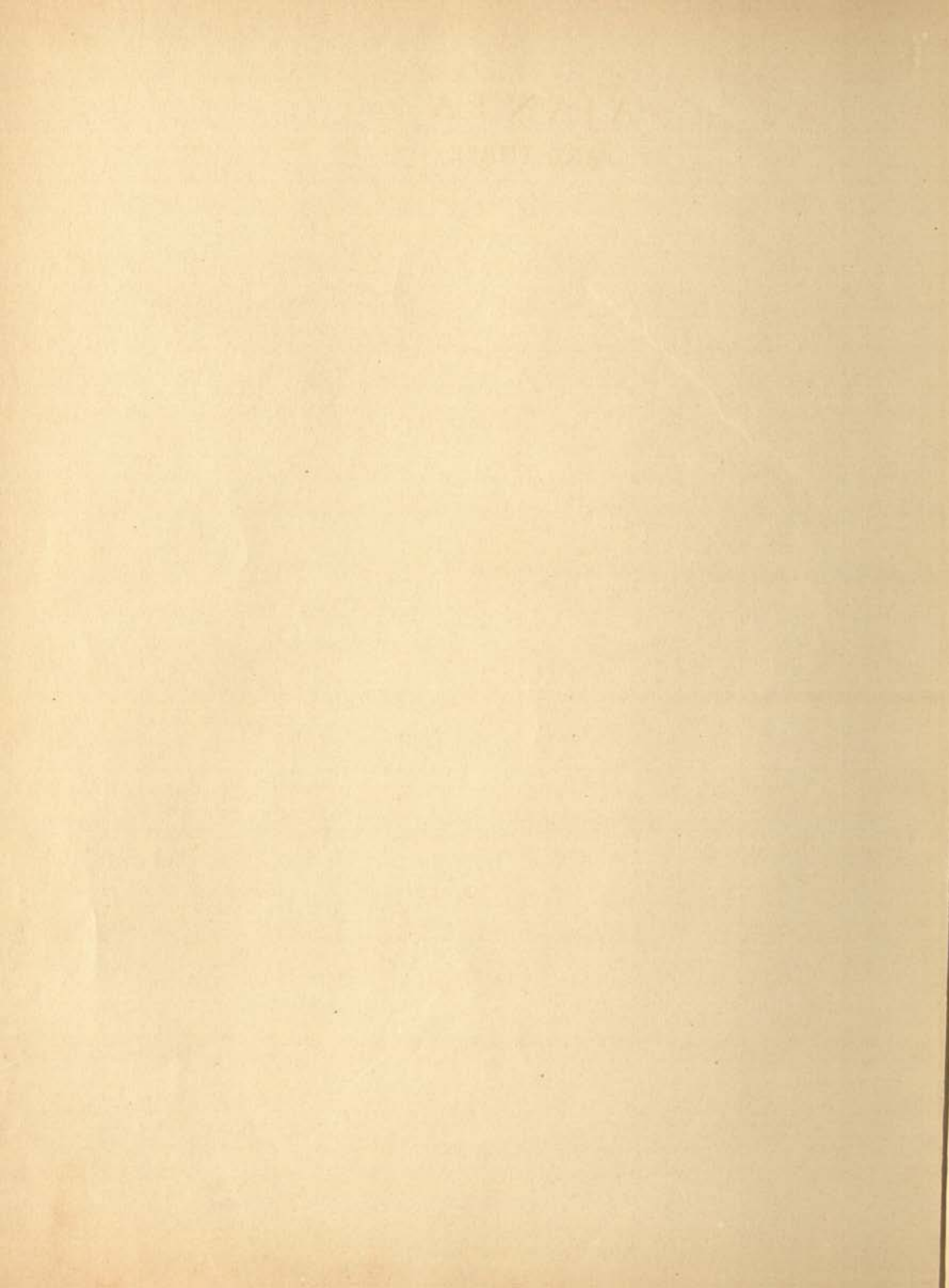












# AJANTA

PART THREE



ADVA [REDACTED]

LAST DAY



# AJANTA

THE COLOUR AND MONOCHROME REPRODUCTIONS OF THE AJANTA FRESCOES BASED ON PHOTOGRAPHY

*With an Explanatory Text by*  
G. YAZDANI, O.B.E.

*and an Appendix on Inscriptions by*  
N. P. CHAKRAVARTI, PH.D.  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN INDIA

*H.N.*  
~~1898~~



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PART III

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## PREFACE

PART II of *Ajanta* was published in 1933, and although the material for Part III was collected and sent to the press shortly afterwards, yet the making of blocks and printing of plates, which require a great deal of care, took considerable time, and meanwhile broke out the war, which caused further hindrance in the progress of the work. I am, however, very grateful to His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Government for financing the production of this Part, and also to the authorities of the Oxford University Press, particularly to Dr. John Johnson, C.B.E., the Printer, who managed to keep the work going under very trying circumstances. The production of the book during war-time is therefore a great achievement of the organizing capacity of the Oxford University Press on the one hand, and the generous policy and patronage of learning of His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Government on the other.

As this Part deals with some caves in which the original frescoes have deteriorated badly and become very dim, but artistic detail can still be copied and utilized for study, I have arranged for the inclusion of the 'outlines' of these subjects, which number as many as twenty-three and are shown in nine plates. Further, to avoid misunderstanding regarding the faithfulness of the 'outlines' I have also included the photographs of all these dim subjects, having taken them direct from the rock-walls. By this plan, although the number of plates has increased, yet it has served a double purpose: first the photographic survey of the frescoes of Ajanta has been made as complete as possible, and secondly the student of art will now be able to compare the 'outlines' with the photographs in regard to the salient features of the drawings. Apart from the reproductions of the inscriptions which are included in the Text volume and whose number is considerable, the Plates portfolio of this Part comprises five key-plans, fifty-two monochrome and seventeen colour-plates, the total number thus exceeding that of the plates contained in Parts I and II. The monochrome plates and the Text volume have been printed by the Oxford University Press, while the making of the blocks of the colour-plates and their printing have been done by Messrs. Henry Stone & Son of Banbury and London, and I have great pleasure in stating that the Directors and the staff of both these presses have not only observed the utmost care in executing the difficult task entrusted to them but have shown a genuine personal interest in making the efforts of the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad successful as regards the publication of this book.

This Part also contains a large number of inscriptions, ranging in date from the second century B.C. to the fifth or sixth centuries A.D., and I have to express my deep gratitude to Dr. N. P. Chakravarti for kindly editing all these records in spite of his heavy duties under the Government of India, first as Government Epigraphist and afterwards as Deputy Director-General of Archaeology in India.

Lastly, I should thank heartily my esteemed friends Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, C.S.I., Hon. Vice-President, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and Dr. L. D. Barnett, Librarian and Lecturer in the School of Oriental Studies, University of London, for their kind and willing help in the matter of the transliteration of proper



## PREFACE

names, the correction of proofs, and the furnishing of scholarly information from Buddhist literature and other books which are beyond the pale of study of an archaeologist like myself.

G. YAZDANI

ORANGE GROVE,  
KHAIRATABAD, HYDERABAD, DECCAN  
*Dated 19th May 1942*

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## EXPLANATORY TEXT

## GENERAL REMARKS

THIS Part takes back the history of Ajanta frescoes to the second century B.C., for an inscription painted in Cave X on the left wall, behind the third pillar from the entrance, has been assigned by scholars to the middle of that century, while another inscription carved on the façade of the same cave is considered to be still earlier.<sup>1</sup> Further, from the affinity between certain paintings of this cave and those of Cave IX,<sup>2</sup> it appears that the early frescoes of both these caves are almost contemporary, and represent a style in which the artist depicts the story in a truthful manner without much decorative embellishment. The style is, however, fairly developed, the drawing being firm and accurate and showing due regard to the three dimensions. We also notice a balanced judgement in the grouping of figures and a cultured taste in the choice of poses (Plate XXIV). The colours used are only a few, red-ochre, terre-verte, lamp-black, and white of lime, which have been used pure or mixed to produce the desired effect in the scheme (Plate XXVI).<sup>3</sup> The figures are not altogether devoid of expression, and they show considerable religious feeling; but this feature of the Ajanta paintings is more prominent in the frescoes of the right wall of Cave X; in the representations of the *Śyāma Jātaka* and the *Shaḍ-Danta Jātaka*. They are of course some five hundred to six hundred years later than their prototypes on the left wall,<sup>4</sup> but during this period it appears that the artists of Ajanta had made very great progress in imparting life and giving definite characters to the *dramatis personae* of their productions. The grief of the blind parents of *Śyāma* at his tragic death by an arrow shot by the *Rājā* of Benares (Plate XXIX *b*) and the fainting of the Queen at the sight of the tusks in the *Shaḍ-Danta Jātaka* (Plate XXX *c*) are so vivid that it is difficult to find their match in the contemporary paintings of other countries.

In the fifth century A.D. the art of Ajanta attained to a still higher level, and the frescoes of Caves XVI and XVII, both of which, according to the inscriptions carved on them, belong to the fifth century A.D.,<sup>5</sup> display not only superior intellectual qualities in the conception of themes, but also more refined taste and more perfect technique in the beauty of design, balance of poise, and blending of colours. For example, the scene from the Conversion of Nanda,

<sup>1</sup> In the Text volume of Part I (p. 2) I assigned Cave X on the authority of Fergusson (*Cave Temples of India*, pp. 285-7) to the second century A.D., but recently the inscriptions of Cave X have been carefully studied by Prof. Lüders, who on palaeographic grounds is definitely of opinion that the painted inscription belongs to the middle of the second century B.C., while the inscription of the façade is still earlier, *va*, *pu*, *gha*, and *kha*, showing Aśokan forms.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Plates XV-XVIII. The pillars of the front gallery of this cave are identical in form with the pillars of the veranda of the *vihāra* at the right end of the caves at Bhaja which bears an inscription of the first century

B.C. There is also considerable resemblance between the ornaments and the dress of the *Nāga* figures of Cave IX and the figures of *rājās* shown in the sculptures of the *vihāra* at Bhaja.

<sup>3</sup> For further information regarding the pigments used at Ajanta see the *Annual Report* of the Archaeological Department, Hyderabad, for 1936-7, Appendix A, pp. 25-30.

<sup>4</sup> There are several inscriptions which on palaeographic grounds may be assigned to the third and fourth centuries.

<sup>5</sup> *Hyd. Arch. Series*, No. 14, and Burgess's *Report on the Buddhist Cave Temples*, A.S.W.I., pp. 124 ff.



popularly known as the Dying Princess, on the left wall of Cave XVI (Plate LII),<sup>1</sup> or Indra with his troupe of musicians in the veranda of Cave XVII (Plate LXVII), or the group of heavenly votaries saluting the Lord Buddha in the same veranda (Plates LXXI-LXXII), may, in regard to vividness of expression, or grace of form, or charm of decorative detail, or soft effect of colours, be compared with advantage with the best specimens of Italian art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The noble traditions of the art of Ajanta continued for several centuries,<sup>2</sup> but in the latter half of the sixth century A.D., during the reign of the Chalukyan kings, who, although tolerant to Buddhism in the beginning, professed and enthusiastically patronized the Brahmanical religion, a radical change came in the inner spirit, and the specimens of this period, with a few exceptions,<sup>3</sup> are more conventional than spontaneous in character. A large number of frescoes in Caves IX and XVI (Plates XV *b*, LVI *a* and *c*, LVII *a*, and LVIII) representing the Buddha in the teaching attitude, seated on a throne and attended by two *chaurī*-bearers, one on each side, although sometimes conveying a certain religious dignity, by frequent repetition become monotonous, and again such themes betray a lack of freedom and narrowness of vision in artistic effort. The apparent reason for the artists' leaving the wider field of the *Jātakas*, which allowed full opportunity for the display of their artistic fancy and technical skill, was that the ruling class and their attendants, on account of professing a different religion, showed no interest in themes which reflected the glory of Buddhism, while such subjects as gods or kings seated on richly bedecked thrones and accompanied by princely attendants suited the ideas of majesty and grandeur of their own faith. Representations of this class are found in great abundance both in Buddhist and Hindu art from the latter part of the sixth century A.D. onwards, and notable imitations of them may be seen in the murals of Padmanabhapuram in Travancore State, which belong to the eighteenth century or are even later.<sup>4</sup>

The frescoes which are described and studied in this Part are to be found in seven caves, Nos. VI, VII, IX, X, XI, XVI, and XVII, the architectural features of which are on a par with their pictorial embellishment. Two of these caves, Nos. IX and X, are *chaityas* (cathedrals), which on account of their close resemblance to the caves at Bhaja, Bedsa, Kondane, and Karle may be assigned to the first or second century B.C. Fergusson has considered Cave IX to be the earlier of the two, but its façade has no porch, and moreover the curvilinear brackets of the doorway (Plate XIII), and the slender pillars of its front corridor are decidedly later

<sup>1</sup> This subject has hitherto been called the Dying Princess, but it really represents the deserted wife of Nanda. The other episodes of the story of the Conversion of Nanda are painted on the rock-wall adjoining the former subject.

<sup>2</sup> As is to be noticed in the paintings at Ellora, Bagh, and Sittanavasal, *vide Annual Reports of the Archaeological Department, Hyderabad, 1927-8 and 1933-4*, Pls. A to D and I-IV, and *The Paintings in the Bagh Caves*, by Sir John Marshall, Dr. J. Ph. Vogel, and M. B. Garde.

<sup>3</sup> The figure of a *Bhikshu* in Cave VI, upper story

(Plate VII *a*), shows the perfect command of the artist in the selection of pose and the imparting of a spiritual feeling to his work. This cave was, however, hewn in the latter part of the sixth century A.D.

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the artistic merits of the Padmanabhapuram paintings Dr. J. H. Cousins writes as follows: 'Along with a remarkable exuberance of detail and decoration, they expressed a dignified reserve in the deific figures, and through a strict convention managed to convey a vivid sense of super-personality.' *Proc. and Trans. of the All-India Orient. Conf.*, 1937, p. 45.



## GENERAL REMARKS

features, so that the cave cannot be placed earlier than the first century B.C. The plan of this temple is rectangular (Plate XII), which is again a novel feature for a *chaitya*, as it always has an apsidal end. The dimensions of Cave IX in comparison with its prototypes mentioned above, or even Cave X at Ajanta, are much smaller, being 45 ft. in length, 22 ft. 9 in. in width, and 23 ft. 2 in. in height. The pillars are octagonal in form, plain in design but slightly decreasing in girth as they rise. Their total number is twenty-one, and each of them is 10 ft. 4 in. high. The *dāgoba*, carved near the end of the hall, has a cylindrical base 5 ft. high, while its dome rises only 4 ft. above it, but it is crowned by a square capital, representing a relic-box, and an abacus consisting of six fillets, each projecting over the one below. The abacus originally supported a wooden umbrella, as at Karle. The inner architecture of the cave is characterized by solemn dignity, befitting a place of worship. The façade of the cave is, however, richly decorated with Buddhist religious motifs, such as the berm-railing, the *chaitya*-window, and the lattice-frame. The colossal figures of the Buddha, carved in the rock along the sides of the cave, are later additions (Plate XIII), and may have been executed in the fifth or sixth century A.D., when the Mahāyāna doctrines of image-worship better appealed to the religious sentiment of the votaries.

Cave X, although completely deprived of its front, is more impressive on account of its lofty ceiling and spacious nave.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-nine pillars divide the aisles from the nave, and support an entablature from which the vault of the barrel-shaped roof springs (Plates XXII-XXIII).<sup>2</sup> The latter originally had curvilinear rafters and cross-beams of wood in imitation of the ceiling of a structural building. Their use was, however, conventional, for they could not have given any support to the rock-roof. Pieces of old rafters still remain in the mortises, but in the *chaitya*-caves at Karle, Bedsa, and Kondane they are seen in perfect form and a better state of preservation. The *dāgoba* of Cave X is of massive proportions. The design is plain, except the capital, which as usual is decorated with Buddhist architectural motifs. Above the capital there was originally a wooden umbrella, which, like the beams of the ceiling, has perished.

As the front of the cave is completely destroyed, it is difficult to determine whether it had a rectangular porch like the caves at Karle and Bedsa. An inscription in Brāhmī characters of the second century B.C. carved on the façade, states that Vāsīṭhīputa made the endowment for the doorway of the temple.<sup>3</sup> Traces of old brickwork exist along the side walls of the cave in the front, and it is not unlikely that the doorway mentioned in the inscription was a later construction built of bricks, which are of a large size measuring 20 in. in length, 12 in. in breadth, and 3 in. in thickness.

The simple dignity of Caves IX and X is maintained by the architecture of Cave XII, which is a *viḥāra* (monastery) and has no painting. The walls of the monastery above the cell-

<sup>1</sup> The inner dimensions of the cave are: depth 95 ft. 6 in., width 41 ft. 1 in., and height 36 ft.

<sup>2</sup> The pillars are octagonal in form and rise to a height of 14 ft. from the floor. The entablature has a height of 9 ft. 6 in. above the pillars, and the vault of the roof rises 12 ft. 6 in. higher still. The pillars, like their prototypes

in other early caves of Western India, do not rise perpendicularly, but have an inward lean in imitation of the posts of bamboo-structures, to stop the thrust of the curvilinear roof.

<sup>3</sup> *Infra*, Appendix, p. 86.



doors are, however, adorned with carving of early Buddhist style: the berm-rail design, screens of floral and wood patterns,<sup>1</sup> the horse-shoe arch-heads, and a parapet of Mesopotamian origin.<sup>2</sup>

Cave XI, although situated between Caves X and XII, from the point of view of both architecture and painting is of a much later date than either of the latter two caves.<sup>3</sup> Fergusson has included it in the group of earliest caves at Ajanta, but its façade, its pillars, its plan of the main hall and the shrine, and its main doorway and windows place it unmistakably among the latest caves at Ajanta, which belong to the latter part of the sixth century A.D. The cave is approached by a stair, and the high plinth is decorated in the form of a balustrade, which does not have curvilinear posts and rails in the style of earlier caves, but plain flat columns and horizontal bars such as we notice in the parapets of structural temples of the medieval period (Plate XXXVIII).

The plan of this temple consists of a narrow veranda, a small hall with corridors on all four sides, and a shrine which is without any antechamber.<sup>4</sup> The front columns of the veranda are plain octagonal, but their bracket-capitals have a design of rolled-up curtain-ends, such as we notice frequently in later caves (Plate XXXVIII). There are four cells attached to the veranda and six more in the interior of the cave, the latter being connected with the left and back walls of the hall. There is also a small recess on a high level in the shrine, which was apparently meant for storing sacred relics or other valuable articles of the temple. The shrine has a sort of *pradakshina* round the figure of the Buddha, which is again a feature of the later caves. In front of the figure of the Buddha there is a statue of a votary kneeling in adoration. The head of this figure being very much damaged, it is difficult to judge of its facial expression, but the pose is very natural and shows devoutness.<sup>5</sup>

The hall is 37 ft. wide by 28 ft. deep and 10 ft. high, and is supported by four columns of a heavy style resembling the columns of Cave VII (Plate X), with which cave it appears to be coeval.<sup>6</sup>

In the fifth century A.D. Buddhist architecture, like the sister arts of sculpture and painting, seems to have reached a very high level, for the design and plan of Cave XVI indicate elegance combined with architectural vigour.<sup>7</sup> The cave has fortunately an inscription, incised on the

<sup>1</sup> The floral designs are identical with those carved above the doorway of the *chaitya* at Nasik (Plate XXV, *Cave-temples of India*), which according to the inscriptions engraved therein belongs to the first century B.C. or the first century A.D. There is a Brāhmī inscription in Cave XII as well, which from the style of the script may be assigned to the same period. *Infra*, Appendix, pp. 85 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The parapet of this design is seen freely in the Moorish buildings of Spain and North Africa, where the Arabs introduced it in the eighth century A.D. and onwards. An earlier prototype has been found recently in the excavations at Ur, and it probably came to the Deccan through Parthian or Scythian immigrants, several waves of whom moved towards India in the first millennium B.C. These foreigners after their settlement in India embraced Buddhism because it had no race prejudice.

The parapet in the earliest caves is found only on their richly carved façades, as at Bhaja, Karle, and Kondane, but later it is seen in the embellishment of the interiors of the caves also, as in this *vihāra*—Cave XII, Ajanta. The absence of this parapet in the interiors of the earliest caves may indicate that the holy personages of the *Sangha* permitted the carving of only such motifs and symbols inside the temples as had a direct bearing upon the origin and growth of the tradition of the faith.

<sup>3</sup> For the style of painting of this cave see *infra*, pp. 39–41.

<sup>4</sup> *Buddhist Cave-Temples*, A.S.W.I., Plate XXVIII, 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Plate XXXVIII, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Cave Temples of India*, by Fergusson and Burgess, Plate XXX, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Between Caves XII and XVI are situated Caves



## GENERAL REMARKS

left wall near the end of the façade, bearing the name of the Vākāṭaka king Harisheṇa, who ruled in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> The plan of this temple can be best understood with the help of Plate XLIII. It has a spacious veranda, 65 ft. long by 10 ft. 8 in. wide, flanked towards the front by six octagonal pillars and two pilasters, the latter being most beautifully carved (Plate XLII *b*). The hall is entered by three doors, the middle one being larger in dimensions than those on either side of it. There are also two windows between the main door and the side ones. The pilasters on either side of the main doorway have lively female figures standing on *makaras*.

The front gallery of the interior of the cave is a little longer than that at the back of the hall, the former measuring 74 ft. in length. Another peculiarity of this gallery is that it has a flat ceiling with beams and rafters carved thereon in imitation of their prototypes in wood. In order to make the copying complete, the ends of the heavier beams are supported by brackets designed in the form of fat dwarfs (*gaṇas*), or flying figures (*apsarases*) arranged in pairs. The sculptor has carved these figures with very great skill, showing the *gaṇas* to be overburdened by the heavy weight of the beams, while the *apsarases* are represented as gay and joyous, their hilarious mood being not affected in the least by the burden which they bear on their necks and shoulders (Plates XLIV *a* and XLV). The sculpture of India has often been criticized as rigid and ungraceful, but who would not admire the rhythmic poise, the pulsating life, and the attractive features of these figures (Plate XLV *b*)?

The hall is 66 ft. 3 in. long, 65 ft. 3 in. deep, and 15 ft. 3 in. high. It is flanked by twenty columns, sixteen of which are of plain octagonal form, but the two middle ones in each of the front and back rows have square bases, and change first to eight and then to sixteen sides on the shafts with square heads and bracket capitals. The various lotus designs carved at the places where these shafts change their form are extremely pleasing, particularly the thin stalks of the lotus plant running along the octagonal sides with half-opened flowers at their tops (Plate XLIV *a*).

The shrine is entered from the back gallery of the hall, and it has no antechamber. Another unusual feature of the plan of the shrine is that it has two side chambers from which it is

XIII to XV. Of these No. XIII is the earliest and was used as a dormitory by the monks who were attached to the great *chaitya*-cave, No. X. It has seven cells and a small hall in front, measuring 13½ ft. in width, 16½ ft. in depth, and 7 ft. in height. The cells have, however, very neatly cut beds which are further carved at one end in the form of a pillow. The doors of the cells are very narrow, nor is there much space inside them, these features indicating that they were used for sleeping only. Cave XIV was inaccessible previously, but the cleaning of Cave XIII in recent times has exposed a stair in its right side leading to the former cave. It was apparently excavated later than Cave XIII and was never finished. The cave has a long veranda, 63 ft. by 11 ft., and an unfinished hall at the back of it, which if completed would have measured 61 ft. by 25 ft. 6 in. Neither Cave XIII nor Cave XIV has any painting. Cave XV is situated quite close to

Cave XIII, but in age it is much later than the former. The plan of Cave XV comprises a veranda, 30 ft. long and 6 ft. 6 in. deep, a hall which has no columns and measures 34 ft. each way, and a shrine with an antechamber in front of it. The figure of the Buddha inside the shrine is not of the conventional type; it is rather slim and the legs are crossed and the feet turned upwards (Plate XLII *a*). This pose is more common in later images, particularly among the representations of Jain gods of seven centuries later. On the frieze above the main doorway are carved four pigeons in very natural poses, and between them is a *stūpa* with a halo of cobra-heads, while the base of the *stūpa* is made of the coils of the same reptile (Plate XLI *b*). The roof of the antechamber of Cave XV has traces of painting.

<sup>1</sup> For further information regarding this inscription see *Hyd. Arch. Series*, No. 14, and *infra*, p. 44.



separated by a screen of two pillars and pilasters. These chambers are also entered from the back gallery of the hall. The image of the Buddha in the shrine is of colossal size, but it is rather heavy in artistic effect (Plate XLIVb).

The architecture of Cave XVII, although in age a quarter of a century later than Cave XVI,<sup>1</sup> maintains the magnificence of the style of the latter. However, as the majority of the paintings of Cave XVII form the subject of the next Part (IV), it will be appropriate to discuss the merits of its architectural detail also in that Part.<sup>2</sup>

The remaining caves (VI and VII) of which the frescoes have been studied and illustrated in this Part are nearly a century later than Caves XVI and XVII, but Fergusson, and in his wake some modern writers also, have placed the architecture of the former two caves earlier than that of Caves XVI and XVII.<sup>3</sup> This opinion does not seem to be correct, the reasons being that the plan of Cave VI both in its upper and lower stories, although conforming to the general plan of the fifth-century *vihāras* of Ajanta,<sup>4</sup> has certain features which seem to be later developments, indicating more or less the vagaries of the architect's mind. For example, he has increased the number of pillars in the lower story with a view to giving adequate support to the rock-floor of the upper story. The architect has shown considerable ingenuity in the arrangement of these pillars by transforming the middle hall of the *vihāra* into three aisles, the central one of which leads to the shrine. But the presence of these pillars in the middle of the hall is somewhat obstructive, for the main idea in designing the hall was that the congregation should sit comfortably on its floor and be able to look freely at each other and also at the chief *Bhikshu* who addressed them on ceremonial occasions. The design of the arch carved over the door of the shrine again is capricious. It springs from the mouths of *makaras*, and is curvilinear (Plate Va).<sup>5</sup> The larger numbers of the figures of the Buddha in the upper story of this cave is another feature indicating a later origin (end of the sixth century A.D.). In the corridors of the upper story, besides the cells there are chapels with pillars in front. Over the chapel at the left end of the front corridor there is a frieze representing figures of elephants in different postures, which show the close observation of the sculptor in studying the habits of the animal. The figures are very lively and indicate considerable movement. One of them is killing a tiger. There is another effigy of an elephant, carved on a bracket in the veranda (Plate Vb). In this sculpture the animal holds garlands round his trunk which he evidently is bringing as an offering to the Buddha. The striking feature of the carving is that the animal has been shown almost trotting, animated by feelings of joy at the sacred mission which he is performing.

The plan of Cave VII is rather unusual, having a long hall (or veranda) with two porches

<sup>1</sup> There is an inscription in Cave XVII also which has been published. According to the genealogy of Vākāṭaka kings given therein the inscription belongs to the early part of the sixth century. *Buddhist Cave Temples*, by J. Burgess, A.S.W. I., pp. 128-32, and *Cave-Temple Inscriptions*, p. 73 seq.

<sup>2</sup> In this Part (III) only the paintings of the veranda of Cave XVII have been studied.

<sup>3</sup> *Cave Temples of India*, by Fergusson and Burgess,

pp. 299 ff., and *Indian Architecture*, by P. Brown, pp. 66-7.

<sup>4</sup> Caves I, II, XVI, and XVII, which according to contemporary inscriptions belong to the fifth century A.D.

<sup>5</sup> Over the shrine door of Cave XX is also a similar arch, but the latter consists of two curvilinear parts each springing from the mouth of a *makara* and resting in the middle on a lotus-flower. *Buddhist Cave Temples*, Plate XX, Fig. 1.



## GENERAL REMARKS

in front and an antechamber and a shrine at the back (Plate X). There are also cells, four in the back wall, and three in each of the side rooms built at the right and left ends of the hall.<sup>1</sup> The side rooms have been excavated on a higher level than the hall, and as the approach to them is unfinished they appear to be later additions. As this cave is near the old steps which formed the main approach from the valley to the group of the earliest caves, IX, X, XII, XIII, and XIV, it is likely that its plan was changed at various times according to the requirements of the monastic orders which were established there. The sculpture of the antechamber and the shrine of this *vihāra*, however, show it to be a late sixth-century excavation.

In summing up these remarks it may be observed that the main two types of the rock-hewn temples of Ajanta, that is, the *chaitya* and the *vihāra*—the former beginning with a rectangular portico and a nave with side aisles arranged in the form of an apse at the end, in the second century B.C., and the *vihāra* starting with only a square hall having cells excavated on three sides of it—kept to these plans under the Hīnayāna school, which seems to have continued in the Deccan up to the third century A.D. But in the fourth century, under the influence of the Mahāyāna school, the representations of the Lord himself in various *mudrās* (attitudes), either carved in rock or painted, and a well-developed pantheon comprising a number of other gods and goddesses, necessitated the excavation of niches in the aisles and other prominent parts of a *chaitya*, such as the *dāgoba*, for the insertion of these deities. Similarly, the same causes brought about a change in the original plan of the *vihāra*, which, instead of comprising a bare hall, began to have a corridor on all four sides of the hall and a shrine with an antechamber at the end. The shrine was added to house the figure of the Lord, and the antechamber for the accommodation of the principal deities of the faith. At Ajanta the earliest *vihāra* of the latter class is Cave IV,<sup>2</sup> which has a colossal image of the Buddha in the shrine and some dainty carvings on the doors and the windows of the hall opening on the veranda. The large dimensions of this cave,<sup>3</sup> combined with the massiveness of its architectural features and the frugal use of decorative work, present a faithful picture of Buddhist religious dignity, reflecting the restraint of monastic life on the one hand and the expansiveness of spiritual life on the other. The *vihāra*<sup>4</sup> was probably excavated in the third century A.D. or still earlier;<sup>5</sup> but the decorative work may have been done at a later date.

Although in this brief notice of the outstanding features of the paintings and architecture of Caves IV–XVI their serial order could not be observed, yet in describing the stories painted on the rock-walls of these temples and in studying the artistic merits of the frescoes the serial order of the caves will be strictly followed, so that the plan adopted in Parts I and II, dealing with the frescoes of Caves I and II, is maintained in this Part as well.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Plates XXVII, XXVIII, Fig. 1, and XXXVII, Fig. 2.

<sup>2</sup> It has traces of paintings in the ceiling of its veranda; but they are too faint and fragmentary to be reproduced in this publication.

<sup>3</sup> The hall of this cave measures 87 ft. each way and is supported by twenty-eight columns, 3 ft. 3 in. in diameter.

<sup>4</sup> The *vihāra* may have been built at the same time

as the *chaitya*-cave X, for a temple of colossal size required a large monastery for the dwelling of monks.

<sup>5</sup> Caves III and V are both unfinished and have no paintings. The former was inaccessible until recently; but a stair has recently been constructed by the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad to give access to this cave. Cave V is interesting as showing the method which was followed in excavating the temples.



## THE BUDDHA IN THE TEACHING ATTITUDE FIRST SERMON (?)

### Plate IIa

*The subject is painted on the left wall of the antechamber in the lower story of Cave VI.*

THE fresco is much damaged, and hence it is difficult to decide whether the subject represents the First Sermon or the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī.<sup>1</sup> The principal figure of the Buddha is in the teaching attitude, but the smaller representations are painted in other *mudrās* as well. For instance, the Buddha to the left proper of the larger figure is in the *bhū-sparsa* or earth-touching attitude.<sup>2</sup> They are all seated on large full-blown flowers of the lotus,<sup>3</sup> and are separated from each other by stalks of the same plant, which bear flowers in various stages of bloom. There are some figures below those of the Buddha, one of which, apparently representing a woman, is making an appeal to the Great Being, for she has placed her right hand upright on her head. The artist has drawn the fingers of her hand with much skill and feeling, and to show his love of ornament he has painted a ring with a large jewel round the second finger of the lady.

An interesting feature of this fresco is that in some places the original outline of the subject in red is preserved, wherein the corrections of the master-artist in black are also seen.

## DVĀRAPĀLAS AND A FEMALE VOTARY

### Plates IIb, IIIa-b, and IVa

*These figures are painted on the back wall of the antechamber, on either side of the shrine-door, in the lower story of Cave VI.*

THE door of the sanctuary in the lower story of Cave VI originally had richly dressed *dvārapālas*, whose heads and other parts of the body are almost obliterated now, but there still exist fragments showing that they wore long coats and lavishly bedecked girdles and waistbands. The figure of the *dvārapāla* to the right of the shrine-door is reproduced in Plates IIIb and IVa by way of illustration.<sup>4</sup> The latter is based on a photograph taken direct from the rock-wall, while the former is a faithful tracing of the original fresco. Of this *dvārapāla* a part of the left arm had survived, which has now been carefully preserved by the mechanics of the Department. The arm shows skilful drawing and perfect command in expressing inner feeling, which in this case may be interpreted from the gesture of the sensitive fingers of the *dvārapāla*. The figure represented some *rājā*, for the Bodhisattvas and *Yakshas*

<sup>1</sup> This subject is frequently painted at Ajanta, *vide* Part I, pp. 34-5, and Part II, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> For this as well as other *mudrās* see Part I, p. 34 n.

<sup>3</sup> The lotus was a symbol of self-creation among the

Buddhists. See A. Getty's *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> The two *dvārapālas* are also reproduced in *The Paintings of Ajanta*, by J. Griffiths, vol. ii, figs. 134-5.



are not generally delineated as wearing coats. The *dvārapāla* has ornaments on his arm, wrist, and little finger, but what strikes one most is the design of his girdle, which contains scrolls, flowers, and check-patterns in alternating divisions. The design was apparently worked out in embroidery, the material being silk or gold and silver threads, or all three.

The *dvārapāla* is further adorned with a belt of pearls or gold beads, and also with chains of the same metal which hang down to the border of his dress. The jewel-rooms of the Deccan kings seem to have abounded in pearls and gold at all times, for beside the lavish display of such ornaments in the paintings of Ajanta, when we come to the medieval period we find 'Alāu'd-Dīn *Khaljī* carrying off a booty of 50 maunds of gold and several maunds of pearls in addition to valuable stuffs and a large number of elephants and horses, after his conquest of the Deccan.<sup>1</sup>

The figure of the *dvārapāla* to the left of the shrine-door is still more damaged;<sup>2</sup> but in the lower part of the fresco the head of a lady can be made out with certainty, and the fresco when complete must have been one of the masterpieces of the later style of Ajanta<sup>3</sup> (Plates II b and III a). The face shows much serenity, and the features which are intact are beautifully drawn. The most attractive parts of the fresco are the ornaments and the coiffure. The former comprise a necklet of large pearls and several strings of smaller pearls round the neck, two types of ear-rings, and a pearl ornament round the forehead, the strings of which along with a garland of flowers are intertwined with the hair. A large flower has been placed above the temple on one side, while the hair above the forehead is arranged in small clusters like the drops of an ornament. The effect is extremely charming. The large ear-rings owing to their weight have been attached to the middle of the ear, but still the ears are elongated, being rather conventional in shape, as noticed in contemporary Buddhist sculpture. The small ear-rings with pearl drops shown in the upper parts of the ear are still in vogue in the Deccan.

## TEMPTATION OF THE BUDDHA

### *Plates III c and IV b*

*The scene is painted on the right wall of the antechamber in the lower story of Cave VI.*

THE fresco is much damaged and it will be difficult for the reader to trace the drawing of the various figures either with the help of the photograph (Plate IV b) or the tracing (Plate III c). On the rock-wall a keen eye may, however, notice the figure of Māra to the right proper of the Buddha. He is richly adorned with jewels, as befitting the dignity of a rājā, and is wearing a *dhotī* of striped silk to cover the lower part of his body. In his left hand he

<sup>1</sup> Briggs's translation of the *Ta'rikh-i-Firishta*, vol. i, pp. 307-10.

<sup>2</sup> A colour-reproduction of a fragment of this fresco has been given by Griffiths in Part II, Plate 134.

<sup>3</sup> Griffiths has reproduced this figure in Part I, p. 10 (Fig. 12) and apparently reconstructed it with a view to showing the full beauty of the drawing.



## AJANTA: EXPLANATORY TEXT

holds either a curved sword or a sharp sickle to cut off the head of the Buddha, who is sitting in the middle, unperturbed, in the *bhūsparśa* (earth-touching) attitude. The head of the figure representing Māra is too much damaged to show any expression, but the painter must have tried to show him in an angry mood. Between the figures of Māra and the Buddha there is the representation of a stalwart warrior whose head is missing. Below him, by way of contrast, the artist has painted the figure of a goblin with tiny hands and the head of an animal. He has strange headgear and a waist-band from which little bells are hanging. The goblin is trying to shake the throne of the Buddha. Near the nimbus, round the head of the Buddha, the faces of two demons may be seen, with bulging eyeballs and dumpy noses. Below them are the trunks of two elephants, apparently throwing a strong spray of water to disturb the Buddha in his meditation. Behind them the hands, trunks, and legs of several other figures may be noticed. One of them has thrown up a horse, which is seen in the air over the head of the Buddha. The figure of the horse is intact, and it is shown falling down on its back with its legs and muzzle turned upwards. To the left proper of the Buddha are two more monsters, riding on donkeys. The one nearer to the Buddha has two skulls in his headgear. The other is apparently wearing a mask to frighten the Buddha. The lower end of the mask is seen across the face of the demon. Below these the traces of some more figures may be noticed, and also the head of a cobra which was possibly used as a lash by some demon.

Below the throne of the Buddha were painted the daughters of Māra, disporting themselves in an enticing manner. The head of only one figure can be seen; the rest have completely perished. Such subjects gave the artist an opportunity to display his sense of the grotesque, which he has done admirably, inspired by the religious stories which were extant at that time regarding this great event in the life of the Buddha, that is, his enlightenment after protracted meditation.<sup>1</sup>

## A BHIKSHU

### Plates VIIa and VIIIa

*This figure is painted near the feet of the Buddha carved on the left wall of the antechamber in the upper story of Cave VI.*

THE upper story of Cave VI, like the ground floor, was originally adorned with frescoes, but the bats and other unsympathetic denizens of the cave have subsequently wrought havoc on a large scale, and except a few fragments clinging here and there, the paintings have completely perished. In the upper story of the cave, however, some specimens have survived which retain the original colours and are reproduced in Plate VII a-b. The most interesting of these is the figure of a *bhikshu* in the act of adoration. He is kneeling before the figure

<sup>1</sup> There are traces of painting inside the shrine and on the wall of the back corridor. On account of the fires of the *yogīs* and the neglect of centuries combined with climatic deterioration, these paintings have become

extremely dim. Still, on the wall of the back corridor, to the right of the antechamber, the figure of the Buddha seated on a throne may be seen.



of the Buddha and looking up towards his face with the light of hope in his eyes. The drawing of the figure is firm, marked by a black outline. The fingers and toes have been painted as usual with very great care, but in this figure the remarkable feature is the large abdomen which generally develops in old age when no physical exercise is taken. The *bhikshu* carries a metal censer in his right hand, while in the left he holds three lotus flowers<sup>1</sup> which he has brought to offer to the Buddha. The colours used in painting this figure are only two, red-ochre and yellow-ochre, relieved by an outline in black. The result is, however, very happy, the former colour very well representing the reddish-brown of the skin of the *bhikshu* and the latter the tint of his scanty garment, comprising a scarf on the left shoulder and chest and a loin-cloth which fails even to reach his knees. The figure is a perfect picture of devoutness and religious hope. The artist could not restrain his sense of humour in painting even a holy person like this, and to evoke laughter he has delineated the tuft of hair on the crown of the *bhikshu*'s head (the *ushnīsha*) in the form of a flower.

## DVĀRAPĀLAS AND PAIRS OF MALE AND FEMALE FIGURES

### Plates VII *b* and IX *a*

*These figures are painted on the jambs and the side-walls of the doorway of the chapel at the right end of the front corridor in the upper story of Cave VI.*

THE figures of happy couples representing donors or *arhats* with their consorts, or dancers attached to the temple, are carved on the façades of the earliest Buddhist *chaityas*, such as those of Karle, Bedsa, Kondane, and Bhaja. But with the passage of time the practice became more a decorative feature than a means of conveying religious significance or representing any particular deities of the Buddhist pantheon. The doorways of the fifth and sixth century temples of the Buddhist faith are therefore adorned with male and female figures in a variety of most delightful poses.

In this subject (Plate VII *b*) we see a lady in a thoughtful mood but with all the charm of her youth, which has been enhanced by scantiness of dress<sup>2</sup> and profusion of ornaments, and above all by a graceful attitude. She has placed one of the fingers of her left hand on her lip in the typical Indian style. The gesture denotes bashfulness as well as mental absorption. The artist was a master of the technique and he thoroughly understood where to lay the shade to accentuate the plastic beauty of the limbs. Behind the lady to her left is another figure who is fully dressed, the lower garment extending much below the knees and the upper part of the body covered either by a large scarf or a coat. Behind the lady is a dwarf of a fair complexion holding something in his hands which is not clear in the fresco.

To the left of this group in another panel is a male figure representing a Bodhisattva or

<sup>1</sup> Some scholars have suggested that the three flowers represent the *triratna*, the Buddha, Order, and Law.

<sup>2</sup> She is wearing a tight bodice of a thin material and a pair of tight drawers which do not reach her knees.



some *arhat* making a religious gesture with the fingers of his right hand. The head of the figure is damaged, but the limbs show careful modelling and the pose is also natural. There is a dwarf in this panel also, but the colours and the drawing are so faint that it is difficult to make out his features with any precision, nor is it possible to appreciate the expression of his face. Above this panel there is another representing two ladies, both of whom are standing, and one of them has crossed her legs in a graceful manner. The upper parts of these two figures are much damaged. Above them there is another couple, in a comparatively better state of preservation. The female figure is looking towards the door of the chapel and has made a loop with the fingers of the left hand, apparently representing some religious mystery.

To the right of these panels, on the jamb of the door, there are three panels representing Parthian male and female figures in a joyous mood, sipping wine or love-making. The male figures have beards, and their caps also prove them to be non-Indian. Corresponding to the last three panels there are three on the right jamb of the door again representing Parthian figures whose blue jackets and peaked caps form a prominent feature. Below these is a female figure accompanied by a small male figure with long hair. The latter is resting on a crooked stick which passes through his legs. To the left of the figure of the woman is a dwarf, the drawing of which has become very dim (Plate IX *a*). Close to the right jamb of the doorway, on another facet of the door-frame, there are three more panels, the lowest of which bears the figure of an *arhat* or a Bodhisattva to correspond to the figure on the left side of the doorway. The remaining two panels contain the figures of females carved in beautiful poses (Plate IX *a*). The presence of figures with sunken cheeks and short beards, wearing peaked caps and full-sleeved coats, as shown in some of the panels referred to above and also in several of the later frescoes of Caves I and II, point to a period in Indian history when Partho-Scythian dynasties were established in Surāshtra and Malwa, whose territories occasionally included the northern parts of the Deccan.<sup>1</sup>

## MIRACLE OF ŚRĀVASTĪ

### *Plates VIIIb and IXb*

*This subject is painted on the right wall of the chapel in the front corridor of the upper story of Cave VI.*

THE miracle of Śrāvastī was a favourite theme of the artists of Ajanta, for it gave the religious-minded novices, as well as the trained craftsmen, an opportunity for painting the Great Being whose figure on account of the various conventional features had become almost stereotyped. The figures of the Buddha painted on the walls of the antechamber of Cave II represent a very poor art, and the work must have been done by beginners with the help of paper-stencils.<sup>2</sup> But in this chapel the artist has delineated the subject with extraordinary skill, making the features of the Buddha highly refined and giving a spiritual effect

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, Part I, p. 46, and *Indian Art of the Buddhist Period*, by G. Yazdani, p. 7 (Oxford Univ. Press).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 28 (f.n. 1) and Appendix, p. 65.



to his appearance by the judicious use of high lights (Plates VIII *b* and IX *b*). The head of the figure in the middle has almost a classical grace (Plate VIII *b*) and may be compared with some of the best works of Italian artists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It bears a striking resemblance to the figure of the standing Buddha on pillar 5 of the right aisle of Cave X,<sup>1</sup> and it is not unlikely that both the figures were painted by the same artist, although some of the frescoes of the latter cave date back to the second century B.C. These two Buddhas, like the other frescoes of Cave VI, are, however, not earlier than the sixth century A.D. This view is confirmed by the characters of a three-line inscription painted on the left wall of the upper story of this cave between the door of the cell and the chapel.<sup>2</sup>

In this fresco the aesthetic taste of the painter has induced him to deviate from the conventional features of the Buddha, that is, thick lips and nose and an almost roundish face, and replace them by a thin nose with short mouth and full lips and an oval face. The effect of the change is very happy, and the figure has become more vivid than in the case of the ordinary paintings of the Buddha at Ajanta. The artist has also made a slight change in the garment of the Buddha, and instead of covering the upper part of his body with a sheet or a large scarf, has dressed him in a full-sleeved robe which is trimmed at the neck with a black collar. This simple alteration has enhanced the artistic effect considerably.

The ceiling of this room was also painted, and traces can still be made out. Besides the usual concentric bands of decorative patterns there are lotus-leaf designs arranged in squares.<sup>3</sup>

## THE BUDDHA IN THE TEACHING ATTITUDE FIRST SERMON (?)

### *Plate XIa*

*The subject is painted on the back wall of the veranda of Cave VII, to the left of the antechamber.*

CAVE VII, being situated at the head of the steps which descended to the valley and the stream therein, was apparently used as a halting-place at the time when the caves were used by the Buddhists for worship, and also in later times when they were relinquished by the Buddhists and occupied by *yogīs* of the Brahmanical faith. The ceiling and walls of this cave, which were adorned with paintings, evidently suffered most from the fires of the *yogīs* which were lit for purpose of cooking or for *homa* (होम) and destroyed the colours. A judicious

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plate XXXVI *b* and Griffiths, 42-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, Appendix, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> The room at the left end of the veranda in the upper story of this cave was also painted, but through percolation of water which came from a crack in the rock-ceiling much damage has been done to the frescoes. This crack has been repaired by the Department, and there is no

danger of any further damage to the walls and the ceiling of the room. On the right wall there are figures of two *apsarases* and also the representation of a serpent. Two Buddhas are also to be seen, one of whom is in the teaching attitude. On the back wall of the room are some architectural designs, showing wooden pillars and roofs, the latter resembling the canopies of chariots (*ratha*).



## AJANTA: EXPLANATORY TEXT

use of ammonia has, however, been found useful to remove the film of smoke and disclose such colours and design as have survived the scorching of fires.

The present subject is one of the frescoes which have been cleaned by the mechanics of the Department, and although the drawing has been much dimmed by the destructive effect of the fires, yet the principal figures can be made out. In the middle is the Buddha seated on a throne, and his feet rest either on a cushion or on a lotus. He is apparently delivering a sermon, for his hands show him in the teaching attitude. On either side of the throne is an attendant. The one on the Buddha's right proper is wearing a crown and a long garment of striped cloth which extends much below his knees. This attendant holds a flower in his right hand and a water-vessel or something similar to that in his left. It is not unlikely that this figure represents the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi, who is generally painted on the right of the Buddha, his special emblem being a blue and white lotus flower.<sup>1</sup> The attendant on the left proper of the Buddha is dressed in the style of royal personages, that is, in a short *dhōṭī* (loin-cloth) of striped silk, the upper part of the body being naked. But this scantiness is generally made good by rich jewellery and an elaborate crown, which in this case have been obliterated by the effect of fire. The water-vessel which he is holding in his left hand can, however, be traced with certainty, and it may be suggested that the Bodhisattva represented here is Maitreya (in Pali, Metteyya), one of whose emblems is a vase.

To the left of this subject there is another Buddha with two attendants, but the figure of the attendant on the right proper of the Buddha has completely perished. As both these subjects are very faint, it is difficult to express any opinion regarding the artistic merits of the frescoes. The colours which have come out by cleaning with ammonia are scarlet, yellow (goldish), and blue, the first shown in the robe of the Buddha and the second and third in his halo. A kind of green colour is also visible in the striped cloth of the dress of the attendants.

## THE BIRTH OF THE BUDDHA

### Plate XIb

*The story is painted on the back wall of the veranda, to the right of the antechamber, in Cave VII.*

THE story is portrayed in two episodes. In the first Mahā-Māyā is shown lying on her bed, with four maids—two near her head and two near the feet—sitting along two sides of the bed, two on each side. Māyā has just had the dream regarding her pregnancy, which according to the Buddhist legend was the descending of a small white elephant from heaven who struck Mahā-Māyā on the right side and entered her womb. The white elephant is not visible in the fresco, but Māyā is lying on her left side and is dressed in a *sārī* of striped silk. To show her surprise after having the dream, the artist has painted her head raised from the pillow, resting on her hand with the arm placed on the pillow. Māyā wants to tell the maids what she has seen in the dream, but they seem to have fallen into deep slumber, burying

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, Part I, Text, p. 28, Pls. XXIV–XXVII.



their faces in the bed. There are doors at each end of the room in which Māyā is resting, and at the door near her feet the figure of a guard is visible. The door near her head probably leads to King Śuddhodana's chamber, and in it we see a rājā and rānī talking together. This is apparently the second scene of the story, and here the painter has shown Māyā speaking to her husband regarding the dream. By the pernicious effect of fires the colours of the fresco have almost perished, but the figures can be made out with certainty, and thus the two episodes of the birth-story of the Buddha have been identified.<sup>1</sup>

## A NĀGA KING WITH HIS ATTENDANTS: JĀTAKA NOT IDENTIFIED

*Plates XV<sup>a</sup> and XVI<sup>a</sup>*

*The subject is painted on the inner side of the front wall of Cave IX, above the left window.*

IN Cave IX there are paintings of different periods, some of which have been laid on older frescoes. As an example of this we notice the figures of two *bhikshus* with an inscription forming part of a fresco which had covered the older painting, now exposed on account of the removal of the former by Mr. John Griffiths some time during the years 1875-85, when he was copying the frescoes with a party of students from the Bombay School of Art.<sup>2</sup> The edge of the painting on which the two *bhikshus* are represented is clearly higher than that of the other fresco, and it appears abruptly on the surface of the latter. The heads of the two *bhikshus* from the style of their painting appear to be of the late fourth or early fifth century A.D.,<sup>3</sup> which view is supported by the characters of the inscription painted above the head of the *bhikshu* with a ruddy complexion. In the background of this fragment the leaves of the Samālū tree (*Vitex trifolia*) show an autumnal effect (Plate XV<sup>a</sup>).

In the main subject, commencing from the left, there are two figures sitting under a mango (?) tree bearing fruit, flowers, and new leaves which have been shown in a light colour. The delineation is somewhat conventional, but still the effect is quite pleasing to the eye. The drawing of the two figures is a little dim in the original, but the detail of the painting can be studied, which it is not so easy to do in the photographic reproduction (Plate XV<sup>a</sup>). The heads of the two figures indicate careful modelling in the original, the outline having been marked in dark red, which has produced an effect of volume in the painting. Griffiths has published what are apparently 'reconstructions' of these two figures,<sup>4</sup> which convey a good idea of the jewellery, the kinds of head-gear, and the poses. By a trained eye the artistic features may still be traced in the original painting, for example, the vermilion tint of the lips and the corners of the eyes, the fine lines indicating the wrinkles of the eyelids and of the skin below the eyes, the white and yellowish dots and lines showing the strings of pearls,

<sup>1</sup> For the various incidents of the birth of the Buddha see Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 38-44, Fausböll's *Jātaka* (Introduction), and *Ajanta*, Part II,

pp. 16-17 (f.n. 1).

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, Appendix, p. 86 f.

<sup>4</sup> Griffiths, vol. i, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Griffiths, vol. i, p. 31.



## AJANTA: EXPLANATORY TEXT

and the washes of light colour to produce the effect of high light. The dress is scanty, consisting of a loin-cloth and a strip of silk, or other material with a design, used as a turban. The strip is intertwined with the hair, both arranged like a turban with a knob at the top. The artist has further crowned the headgear of one of these figures with seven cobra-hoods, and of the other with only one cobra-hood,<sup>1</sup> the distinction being that the former apparently represents a king and the latter his son or minister. In contrast to the dress the jewellery on the bodies of these two figures is elaborate, comprising large wheel-pattern ear-rings, broad necklaces, ornamented metal armlets, and round heavy wristlets. The necklaces consist of strings of pearls which have been joined together by broad clasps of gold or some other precious metal. The styles of jewellery and the headgear of these figures are almost identical with those of the figures carved at Karle, Kanheri, and Amaravati. Apart from the dress and ornaments their physical features are also very typical—oval faces, short noses, full lips, bright eyes, and small figures, but strong limbs. They apparently represent Andhras of the first to third centuries B.C., or of the first to third centuries A.D., that is, of a period when the people of the Deccan, in spite of having embraced Buddhism, were not governed in matters of style and taste by the culture of North India.

The second scene of the story is shown in the adjoining panel to the right, which is separated from the first scene by conventional bands representing hills or buildings. The fresco is much damaged, and in the colour-reproduction (Plate XVa) only its left half is given. The tracing (Plate XVIa), however, shows a king with two attendants, one of whom holds an umbrella and the other a fly-whisk. In front of the king there are five supplicants sitting on the ground in a circle and presenting their case with due respect, as is shown by their hands, which are joined to indicate submission. Behind these five figures there are two more, who are standing and watching the proceedings with interest. Above these two figures an *apsaras* is flying towards the king. The scene has been identified by Burgess with the *Śibi Jātaka*, but there are no events represented to confirm this guess.<sup>2</sup>

The ornaments and dress of the figures in this scene are similar to those of the *Nāga* king and his minister in the previous scene, but the artist in the former has shown a novel design of ear-ring which is in the form of a barrel, hung by little chains from the middle of the ear. The style of painting of the human bodies is very realistic, and the 'reconstruction' of a figure of a woman from this scene given by Griffiths<sup>3</sup> shows that the art at Ajanta had reached a high standard when this scene was painted. It has been mentioned above that the dress and ornaments shown in this subject are identical with those to be seen in the sculptures at Karle, Kanheri, and Amaravati, and as on the basis of architectural features Cave IX has been assigned to the first century B.C.,<sup>4</sup> it is not unlikely that this fresco is also of the same period. The painter has delineated the figures in a variety of poses exhibiting naturalness on the one hand and grace on the other. In the colour-reproduction (Plate XVa) the figure of the *apsaras* admirably conveys the idea of rapid movement.

<sup>1</sup> For *Nāgas* see *Ajanta*, Part I, pp. 11–12, J. Ph. Vogel's *Indian Serpent Lore* (1926), or M. Winternitz's 'Der Sarpabali, ein altindischer Schlangencult', *Mitteil.*

*der anthropol. Gesellschaft in Wien*, vol. xviii (1888).

<sup>2</sup> *Notes on the Buddhist Rock-Temples of Ajanta*, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Griffiths, vol. i, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, p. 3.



## A GROUP OF VOTARIES APPROACHING A *STŪPA*: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

*Plates XVI b-c, and XVII a*

*The several scenes relating to this subject are painted on the left wall of Cave IX.*

THE story painted on the left side of the front wall seems to have been continued on the left wall, for the figures disclosed by the cleaning recently carried out by the mechanics of the Department are not only similar to those on the former wall but also show a continuity of the subject.<sup>1</sup> This fresco also was covered in later times by another, a portion of which, representing six Buddhas, may be noticed on the upper part of the wall.

The old fresco first has a group of sixteen votaries who are approaching the door of a *stūpa* (Plate XVI b). The hair of the votaries is intertwined with strips of cloth in a variety of styles, the artist's imagination not being satisfied with a uniform type. The figure nearest the door has turban-like headgear with a knob in the middle, above the forehead. The heavy figure behind him, who has a beard along the edge of his broad face, is also interesting as regards his headgear, which has an elaborate plaited termination protruding over his forehead. The hair of the young man behind him is also dressed in the same style, but the terminal knob is not so elaborate as that of his burly comrade. The three figures above the last two are wearing turbans, on the tops of which tufts of hair are arranged in a decorative manner; but there is a slight difference in the case of each figure in the style of intertwining the hair with the band of cloth. Differences of similar type are to be noticed in the headgear of other figures, and one of them has his turban and tuft rakishly inclined on one side of the head. The artist's love of variety is also to be seen in the positions of the hands of the votaries, two of whom, nearest the door, have their hands joined together in an attitude of humility. Some of them have raised their hands in the *abhaya*, or assurance, *mudrā*, in which the right hand is lifted up with the elbow curved and palm exposed. The painter's play of fancy can be further studied in the decorative waist-bands, which are tied in front with knots of different styles, and have their ends arranged in a very artistic manner. The grouping of the figures is natural, and the artist has succeeded in conveying an idea of movement, as if the party is approaching the *stūpa*. The drawing shows the body in the round, and there is no flatness such as we notice in medieval Indian paintings. The fine brush-work shown in the dressing of the hair, and in the designs of the jewellery and the folds of the loin-cloth, also exhibits art of a developed stage.

The *stūpa* is enclosed by a wall which has two gates, one of which has a barrel-shaped roof with timber rafters, like that of the contemporary rock-hewn temples (*chaityas*) at Karle, Bhaja, Bedsa, and Kondane, where original timber beams may still be seen. The other gateway is in the style of the Sanchi gateways (*toranas*), and as one of these was built by craftsmen

<sup>1</sup> Burgess in his *Notes*, p. 48, has quoted the following remark of Griffiths: 'Along the rest of the wall beyond these (the figures of the six Buddhas) the plaster is too much smoked to make anything out except some traces of buildings and among them a sort of temple.'



from the Deccan, it may be surmised that this painting is coeval with that gateway.<sup>1</sup> The *stūpa* is built in the middle of the court and decorated with a number of umbrellas, which have been the emblem of royalty in India at all times, even during the rule of Mughal kings. In the right half of the court, near the *torāṇa*, are some musicians, one of whom is playing on a long trumpet, another blowing a conch, another beating a double drum (*dholak*), which is hung from his neck, and another holding a disk-like instrument.

This last figure is almost nude, and has stooped down with the disk in a rhythmic movement apparently to indicate harmony with the notes of the musical instruments. It is the figure of a woman, for heavy anklets such as were worn by women of that period are seen round her feet. There are some more figures, but their poses and features cannot be studied with certainty on account of the peeling away of the fresco in several places. A figure can, however, be made out in the middle of the *torāṇa*.

Outside the enclosure of the *stūpa* towards the right there are two trees, one being a *pīpal* (*Ficus religiosa*) and the other probably a banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*), which is laden with fruit. The latter has a balustrade of upright stones, and may represent the Bodhi-tree under which Gautama obtained enlightenment. Beyond these trees there is a monastery with two courts. The apartments of this monastery have barrel-shaped timber roofs, which seem to have been in vogue at that time.

Outside the monastery, towards the right, there are two figures, the hands of both indicating the *abhaya mudrā*, 'the assurance attitude'. They are standing in front of a tree which is almost obliterated, except for a few leaves which appear to be those of a banyan tree. The faces of these two figures are oval, and although the noses are short, the other features are beautiful. They may represent the donors or builders of the *vihāra* shown at their back, and their presence in front of the sacred tree, symbolic of the Buddha,<sup>2</sup> may signify the fulfilment of a vow. The surmise regarding the building of a *vihāra* is also supported by the structure behind the *apsaras* in the second episode of the story (Plate XVI a), which has been painted there as a hint that the story represents the building of a *vihāra* by a king in fulfilment of a vow.

In the final scene of the story delineated to the right of the last the votaries have assembled in a grove on their journey homewards. This is indicated by the direction of the flight of an *apsaras* towards a house painted at the extreme right end of the fresco, in which several ladies are to be seen. The party comprises five persons, and they appear to be engaged in conversation with a sixth person, who faces them and by the position of his legs seems to be going in the opposite direction. Between the party and the house is a large banyan tree with deep green leaves and red fruit. The trunk and the branches of the tree are painted a pinkish colour.

Inside the house there are four ladies, one sitting on a couch with legs stretched in front.

<sup>1</sup> The Southern Gate of the Sanchi *stūpa* according to a contemporary inscription was built by the sculptors of the Andhra king Śrī Śātakarṇi.

<sup>2</sup> In the sculpture of the Hīnayāna school the Great

Being is not shown in human form, but his presence is indicated by the sacred Bodhi-tree under which he received enlightenment, or by the *stūpa*, or by a throne, or by other symbols.



She is probably the rānī. There is a maid close to the rānī, but her figure is almost obliterated now. In the court of the house are the remaining two ladies, sitting on either side of the fire, the flames of which have been painted like the petals of a lily. They are talking together, and the head of the lady shown in profile has been painted with great skill.

In this fresco, among the colours used blue is not to be seen. Perhaps the artists of Ajanta could not secure the requisite material to prepare this colour until the fifth century A.D., when it is found in abundance and, on chemical analysis, is proved to have been made of lapis-lazuli.

## A MONASTERY

### Plate XX<sup>b</sup>

*The scene is painted on the back wall of Cave IX, near the left end.*

THE several subjects painted on the back wall of Cave IX were copied by Griffiths, but as they are not reproduced in his book, it appears that they were among the eighty-seven copies which were destroyed, or damaged by fire, on 12 June, 1887.<sup>1</sup> Burgess in his *Notes* (p. 48) has, however, quoted the opinion of Griffiths regarding the frescoes in these words: 'They are all that remain of the decoration of the end wall, which is much to be regretted: for, beside their high artistic merit, they illustrate some of the ceremonials of the religious life of Buddhism.'

The present scene<sup>2</sup> is much obliterated, and it has therefore been reproduced in monotone only. Commencing from the left side, we see the Buddha sitting on the ledge of a hill with his feet resting on a rectangular board. There is a water-vessel to the right proper of the Buddha's seat. In front of him are two monks, one wearing a tunic and the other draped in a sheet with his right arm exposed. There is also a third figure, standing behind the Buddha, but not distinct in the reproduction. Lower down are bands of conventional hills, from the crevices of which sprout leaves of creepers, producing rather a realistic effect. Along the bands of hills may be seen the bust of a woman, bent down and pouring water or some other drink from a water-pot into a small vessel. Nearby is also seen in the original fresco a stand with three legs, which are curved near the ends.

To the right is the large figure of the Buddha with his begging-bowl. In front of him are some figures, two of which, representing *sādhus*, are quite distinct. They are all looking up to the Buddha apparently for guidance and inspiration. The beards and the hair of the *sādhus* have been painted with great care, and as regards these features they resemble very much the *sādhus* of the present day. The *sādhus* and other figures before the Buddha may represent the monks who attended Gautama during his six years of striving in the hope that 'when the ascetic Gotama gains the Doctrine he will tell it to us'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta Frescoes*, Text Vol., p. 15.

p. 48, f.n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Section A of Griffiths's copy, *vide* Burgess's *Notes*,

<sup>3</sup> *The Life of Buddha*, by E. J. Thomas, p. 66.



At the back of the Buddha is a pillared building against which a ladder has been placed. Two persons are carrying up water in pitchers, and a third person on a higher rung of the ladder is lifting the pitchers from the shoulders of the men below.

This scene has been identified by Foucher with the Conversion of Jaṭilas. He writes: 'The Buddha, standing, presented to the three Kāśyapa brothers their terrible serpent coiled in his bowl, whilst behind him some novices busied themselves with pitchers and ladders to extinguish the fire of the fire-temple. These two episodes are already well-known in the school of Gandhāra.'<sup>1</sup>

Foucher's identification seems to be correct, for the Conversion of Jaṭilas is also represented in the sculpture of Amaravati, and the subject seems to be a familiar one to both the sculptor and the painter.

## TWO SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

### Plate XVIII

*The scenes are painted on the back wall of Cave IX, to the right of the previous subject.<sup>2</sup> They are reproduced in colour.*

THE two subjects represented in the colour-plate (XVIII) evidently refer to some scenes in the life of the Buddha after his enlightenment. On the rock-wall, proceeding from the left side, the scene marked (b) occurs first. It shows him in the *dharmachakra mudrā*, or teaching attitude. There are two ascetics, one on each side, listening to his sermon in a devout manner. They may be Sāriputta and Moggallāna, who were his chief disciples. In the foreground, to the right proper of the Buddha, is a rājā with his wife and another chief or *yuvarājā* with his consort to his left. The artist's object in bringing in these figures is apparently to balance the grouping of figures in the foreground. The Buddha himself is seated on a royal chair, and has two attendants wearing crowns and rich jewellery. They hold fly-whisks in their hands. Behind the *sādhu* on the right is a *stūpa*, in front of which a monk is reciting something loudly, for he has placed both his hands on his ears. An inscription is painted on the base of the *stūpa*.

Notwithstanding the religious nature of the subject, the artist has been able to show his skill in the painting of the various figures. The most notable among them is the *sādhu* with joined hands, whose curved back and inclined head confirm his devoutness and humility. The plaited hair and the beard show fine brush-work. The high lights on the forehead and the

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Hyd. Arch. Soc.*, 1919-20, pp. 85-6.

<sup>2</sup> Between the monastery and these two scenes there is the figure of a Bodhisattva holding a water-bottle in his left hand. As in Buddhist mythology the vase is the special emblem of Maitreya, the figure in the fresco apparently represents him. The hand in which the Bodhisattva holds the vase has been drawn with considerable artistic feeling. There is high light on the nails, showing

that they are beautifully clean. The right arm has a firm black outline, and the artist has further given colour-washes to indicate the idea of volume. This figure has not been included in either the monochrome plate representing the monastery (XX b) or in the colour-plate XVIII, showing the two scenes from the life of the Buddha.



nose have given a spiritual effect to the face, while the deepening of the outline of the arm and the back has made the figure stand almost in relief.

The head of the lady below the *sādhu* has also been painted with considerable grace. The inner effulgence proceeding from the Buddha has brightened her countenance, while her rapt attention has been admirably indicated by the manner in which she is looking up to the Great Being.

The figure of the chief close to this lady has been much damaged, but he was holding something in his hand, one end of which, in the form of a black streak, projects against the seat of the Buddha.

The fresco from its style appears to be a fifth-century work,<sup>1</sup> and it is not unlikely that the subject was painted by the artist who delineated the Temptation-scene on the left wall of the antechamber of Cave I, for the head of the lady noticed above, in regard to technique, has great resemblance to the work shown in the latter fresco.

The next subject (XVIII a) is separated from the last by the figure of a Buddha, whose torso only is to be seen, the rest being completely destroyed by moisture and other causes. The main scene is, however, well preserved, and it shows the Buddha again in the teaching attitude. He is seated on a throne, and his feet rest on a lotus flower, the stalk of which is held by two *nāga* figures with human bodies and the tails of a serpent. These figures are not clear in the reproduction, but may be made out in the original fresco.<sup>2</sup>

In the left corner there is a Samālū (*Vitex trifolia*) or Aśoka tree, the leaves of which against a dark background have a picturesque effect. Lower down is a *kinnara*, with a human body and the wings and feathers of a bird. He is pointing with the finger of his left hand towards the Buddha.<sup>3</sup> As *kinnaras*, according to Buddhist mythology, are heavenly musicians, his presence in the scene suggests that the story depicted here refers to the preaching of the Buddha in the Tushita heaven. The guess is supported by the third eye of the prince, who is sitting below the throne of the Buddha towards his right proper. On the basis of this eye he has been identified with Śakra or Indra, who is similarly painted with a third eye<sup>4</sup> in the birth scene of the Buddha on the left wall of Cave II.<sup>5</sup> Close to the figure of the *rājā* (Indra?) is that of his consort, who is also listening to the sermon with rapt attention. In front of the throne of the Buddha is a monk, and there are two more in the foreground towards the right. Above them is a lady and higher up an attendant with a fly-whisk in his right hand and the *vajra* (thunderbolt) in his left.<sup>6</sup> He is probably the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi. There is a corresponding attendant on the other side of the Buddha, who may be Padmapāṇi, but his symbol

<sup>1</sup> The characters of the inscription painted on the *stūpa* confirm this surmise; see Appendix, p. 87 f.

<sup>2</sup> According to Burgess, below the figures of the two *nāgas* there was an inscription of which the words *paramopāsaka* could be read. *Notes*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Foucher has identified the *kinnara* with the *gandharva* Pañchaśikha and has observed as follows: 'The scene represents the not less famous visit of Indra preceded by that of his messenger, the Gandharva Pañcha-

śikha, recognizable by his long harp' (*Journal of Hyd. Arch. Soc.*, 1919-20, p. 86).

<sup>4</sup> The third eye being that of wisdom.

<sup>5</sup> *Ajanta*, vol. ii, Text, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> For the *vajra* see *Ajanta*, Part I, p. 35, and also *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, by A. Getty (1st ed.), pp. 48-50, and *Buddhistische Kunst*, by Grünwedel, English translation, p. 90.



the lotus flower (*padma*) is not clear in the fresco. Both of them are wearing pearl ornaments and other jewellery of beautiful design.

The eyes of the Buddha have a dreamy effect, such as we notice frequently in the figures of Caves I, II, XVI, and XVII, and which is not to be found in the earlier frescoes of this cave or in the contemporary frescoes of Cave X. This fact may indicate that the giving of the dreamy effect to the eyes was adopted some time in the fifth century A.D., when the four caves mentioned above were painted. In spite of the meditative mood of the Buddha, the artist has given a divine radiance to his face by high lights, and in the delineation of his fingers he has shown the sensitive nature of the Buddha on the one hand and his own artistry in their beautiful form on the other.<sup>1</sup> This scene also was probably painted by the artist who delineated the previous subject, and both, on account of their close resemblance to the frescoes on the left wall and in the antechamber of Cave I, may be assigned to the fifth century A.D.<sup>2</sup>

## THE ANIMAL FRIEZE: A MYTHICAL HERDSMAN: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

*Plates XVIIb, XIXa-c and XXa*

*The subject is painted on the frieze above the pillars of the nave on the left side in Cave IX.*

THE fresco represents the story of some mythical herdsman who possessed herculean strength and could control the movements of the wildest animals, holding them by their necks and tails. The herdsman himself is a beautiful person, and one may find in his sportive attitude some resemblance to the Brahmanical hero Kṛishṇa, who according to the legends of his career tended the cattle in the meadows of Mathurā and Vṛindāvana. The theme represented in the fresco seems to have been popular among the Buddhist artists of the early period, for it is carved at Kuda, Nasik, and other places.<sup>3</sup>

The fresco has peeled away in several places, but the portions which are intact show the elasticity of the muscles of the herdsman, and a close study by the artist of the structure of the bodies of wild animals. In this scene the herdsman appears four times, first between a lion and a beast which has the head of a bull (?). He is holding back the lion by pulling his tail, and

<sup>1</sup> The palms of the hands of the Buddha have been painted of a lighter colour, which may conventionally indicate either the anaemic condition of his health or the rubbing of some ointment or herb-juice or ashes according to the religious practice of those days.

<sup>2</sup> The stories from the life of the Buddha are continued further on the wall towards the right, and although the fresco is considerably damaged, several of the figures can be made out easily. The Buddha is again seated on a throne and has five monks in front of him, who are listening to his sermon with great attention. They are

apparently the five monks who attended Gautama during his six years of striving, and to whom he taught the Doctrine after his enlightenment. There were two attendants behind the Buddha; the figure of one of them towards the right is intact, and the black border of his lower garment has a very pleasing effect. The frescoes on the back wall of the right aisle have completely perished.

<sup>3</sup> *Cave Temples of India*, by Fergusson and Burgess, Plate VII a. At Nasik it is carved in a slightly modified form on the outer wall of Cave III, above the pillars.



in the effort he has stretched backward his right leg and bent his left knee to exert himself to the full. The attitude is realistic, which, combined with the beautiful features of the herdsman and his picturesque dress, has made the subject very attractive. The herdsman is wearing a conical cap and a scarf round his arm and back, the latter being identical in style with that worn by the chevalier carved on the façade of the *chaitya* cave at Kondane.<sup>1</sup> The hind legs and back of the lion have been drawn with care, and in delineating the growth of hair on the legs the artist has shown fine brush-work. In the next feat he has in front of him a tiger, with the horns and head of an antelope; while in the third he is again exerting himself to the full in controlling a bull whose tail has slipped from his hand and only a hair has remained between his fingers. The bull in order to release himself from the grip of the herdsman has raised his muzzle, indicating the tension of his neck muscles. In the fourth feat the herdsman was pulling back some other beast, but as the front part of the latter is completely obliterated it cannot be identified.

The fresco seems to be coeval with the building of the *chaitya*, and it is interesting to note how even in the first century B.C. the artists of Ajanta could delineate figures in any pose which their artistic mind could conceive and indicate movement or physical struggle with perfect ease.

## THE BUDDHA IN VARIOUS ATTITUDES

### *Plates XVb and XXIa-b*

*These figures are painted on the triforium in Cave IX at different places. The colour subject XVb is painted above pillars 8 and 9 on the right side, the head of the Buddha (XXIa) above pillar 8 on the left side, and the figure of the Buddha (XXIb) above pillar 6 on the right side.*

ON the triforium to the right and left of the *dāgoba* the entire space is filled up with figures of the Buddha. At the top there is a row of seated figures, and below them another row, in which the Great Being is painted seated on a throne and attended by Bodhisattvas and *chaurī*-bearers, the latter standing behind his throne. The Bodhisattvas are also standing, on either side of the throne; each of them has an umbrella over his head, held by an attendant. The thrones have an elaborate design, the upper corners of their backs being shaped like a monster whose head resembles that of an elephant or of an alligator and who has a protruding tongue in the form of a serpent (XVb). The front legs of the throne have the heads of elephants at the top and the bodies of lions with elongated necks as supports. The throne seems to have been made of gold or silver, and the engraving and embossing exhibit clever workmanship.

The heads of the seated Buddhas are more or less conventional, indicating a meditative mood. But the figures of the Bodhisattvas show high skill in modelling and other technical detail. To wit, the head of the standing Bodhisattva to the right proper of the seated figure (XVb) has almost classical features, apart from its spiritual expression and the decorative detail of the

<sup>1</sup> *Sculpture of the Deccan, an Artistic Study*, by G. Yazdani, Silver Jubilee Vol., Bhandarkar Institute, pp. 679-80, Pl. I.



hair which has been dressed up and knotted on the crown of the head. The drawing of the left elbow and hand of this figure also shows much grace and artistic feeling. The Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas are draped in orange sheets, the bodies being light brown, while the complexion of the *chaurī*-bearers is quite fair, and as they are wearing crowns and rich jewellery, they appear to be of the princely class. The background of the fresco has been purposely painted dark green so that the figures in lighter colours may stand out in relief. The artist has used washes of dark colours in order to produce the effect of shading, while high lights on the contrary have been shown by washes of light colour. The style of painting of these figures resembles that of some of the frescoes of Cave II, but there is more imitation in it than any improvement upon the painting of the latter cave. The drawing of some figures is also defective, for instance the arms of the Bodhisattva, painted above pillars 2 and 3 on the right side, are disproportionately long. The grouping of the figures is also monotonous and shows art of a decadent type.

But some of the heads of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as observed above, exhibit careful drawing combined with a love of detail, and the figures above pillar 6 on the right side (XXI *b*) and above pillar 8 on the left side (XXI *a*) are very good examples of that. The eyes of the former have been painted like that of a *yogī* almost closed, as if he were absorbed in contemplation, while his face has been lighted up by the effulgence of his inner experience. The eyes of the other Bodhisattva are bright and clear (*b*), and the artist in showing the curls of his hair has given them rather an ornamental than a real appearance.<sup>1</sup>

## ARRIVAL OF A RĀJĀ WITH HIS RETINUE TO WORSHIP THE BODHI-TREE: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

*Plates XXIV a, XXV a-b, XXVI and XXVII a-b*

*The scene is painted on the back wall of the left aisle, behind pillars 3 to 9 in Cave X.*

LIKE the preceding cave this also has frescoes of different periods on its walls, the oldest, according to a painted inscription, being almost coeval with the excavation of the temple, which, according to another inscription carved on the right side of the outer arch, may be fixed in the early part of the second century B.C.<sup>2</sup> The painted inscription is probably connected with the scene representing the arrival of a *rājā*, whose head, in spite of the very damaged condition of the fresco below the inscription, can be made out with certainty.<sup>3</sup> The figures

<sup>1</sup> The pillars of this cave were also painted, but as they decayed mainly through the accumulation of rain-water during the monsoons, the paintings are not to be seen except in a few places where remnants of the pillars still exist. Adequate arrangements have been made to stop the accumulation of water, and for the support of the triforium the pillars have also been reconstructed.

On a pilaster at the left corner of the hall near the front corridor the *Mṛiga Jātaka* was painted, from which the figure of a stag only can now be seen. There is an inscription on this pilaster.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 1, f.n. 1, also Appendix, pp. 86 f.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix, Pl. I c.



of the attendants of the *rājā* are more distinct on the rock-wall behind pillars 6 to 8. Here we see some soldiers who are all armed with spears, except one who holds a mace. The bust of the mace-bearer is intact, and he is wearing elaborate headgear. It is in the form of a turban at the top, and has flaps for the protection of the ears and also a band which passes below the chin and apparently was meant to keep the headgear firmly fixed to the head.

Farther, to the right of the mace-bearer, are three soldiers armed with axes. Their heads are bare, but they are wearing short-sleeved shirts or jackets. Proceeding farther to the right there is a party of seven more armed men, four of whom are equipped with bows and arrows, and three with curved swords or large sickles. As the fresco, from the characters of the painted inscription, has been assigned to the second century B.C., the accoutrement of the soldiers and the shape and nature of their arms may be of interest to students of the military history of India.

In front of the soldiers is the *rājā*, accompanied by ten ladies and a child. The fresco at this place has suffered a great deal, first by the inclemencies of weather, but more in recent times by the vandal scribblings of visitors. The figures can, however, be made out both in the colour and monochrome plates (XXVI and XXVII *b*), made from photographs taken direct from the rock wall, and the artistic features reproduced in the tracing (XXIV *a*) examined and scrutinized with the help of the former two plates. The *rājā* appears to be offering a prayer before the Bodhi-tree, which is represented here in the form of a *pīpal* tree, bedecked with banners (XXIV *a*). The prayer may be concerning the child who stands just below the tree. The five ladies to the left proper of the *rājā* are looking at his face, while those behind him are watching the ceremony. Among the latter group a lady of short stature, who is at the end of the party, has apparently selected a high place to stand on so that she might see the ritual with advantage. The dress of the ladies is scanty, but they are wearing ornaments in abundance, comprising ear-rings, necklaces, armlets, and bangles. The bangles appear to be of conch or of ivory, such as were in fashion in the Deccan at that time, and specimens of which have been found in great abundance in our excavations at Maski, Paithan, and Kondapur.<sup>1</sup> They are worn in large numbers, covering almost the entire forearm, a practice still in vogue among some of the primitive tribes of the Deccan, notably the Lambādis. Some of the ladies have large scarves or veils covering their heads and backs, which appear only in this fresco and are not to be found in the later paintings of Ajanta. Perhaps the practice was discontinued owing to the influence of the North on the culture and social conditions of the Deccan in the third century A.D., after the extinction of the Andhra dynasty and the establishment of the Vākāṭakas, who were allied with the Guptas by intermarriage. The ethnic features of these figures also deserve special notice. The faces are almost round, noses short but pointed, mouths narrow with full lips, and eyes small yet bright. These are still features of the people of the north-western Deccan, including the Ajanta zone.<sup>2</sup> They are not Āryan, but offer a striking

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report of the Arch. Dept. of Hyd.*, 1936-7, Plate IX, and *Journal of the Hyd. Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, January to August, 1941, Plate XX.

<sup>2</sup> From the large number of megalithic tombs, which

are specially associated with Scythians in all the countries where they migrated and settled down, it appears that they immigrated in large hordes into the Deccan also, in the second millennium B.C. or earlier, and became absorbed in



resemblance to the present local race, a resemblance which we find continued in the frescoes of Ajanta from the fourth century A.D. onwards. The *rājā* is not wearing any crown, but has a band of jewellery round the knob of his hair, arranged like the hood of a serpent.<sup>1</sup> The coiffures of the ladies represent several styles, some of them being very elaborate, while others are quite simple, as the parting of the hair on the left side of the head. Some of the ladies have the circular paint-mark on their foreheads, a feature of the toilet of an Indian lady up to this day. One lady has ornamented her head-band with three feathers of a peacock.

On the other side of the Bodhi-tree is a large party of musicians and dancers, comprising fifteen artistes, all of whom are female. Women are reported to have joined the Buddhist *sanghārāmas* as nuns during the Buddha's own lifetime, or shortly afterwards, but the presence of a well-developed orchestra, such as is shown in this fresco, in the second century B.C., indicates that the organization of female dancers and musicians attached to the temples was borrowed by the Buddhists from the earlier Brahmanical institutions. Two of the party have long trumpets, and the rest are clapping or dancing. Clapping is still used in India, and in other Oriental countries, to mark time or to produce the high pitch effect in music. Among the dancers the one nearest the sacred tree has raised and curved her arms in a curious manner, as if to give the body a writhing movement like that of a serpent. The poses and steps of the other two dancers are typically Indian, and may be observed in the dancing of the present day.

The dresses and jewellery of the musicians and dancers are similar to those worn by the ladies accompanying the *rājā* (XXIVa). Further, six of the musicians are sitting on stools of beautiful wicker-work. These details show that the women attached to the religious orchestra held an honourable position in the life of the *sanghārāma*.

Behind the musicians there are two trees, one a banyan and the other a mango (*Mangifera indica*), both of which are sacred to the Buddhist as being associated with the life of the Master in his previous births.<sup>2</sup> The drawing of these figures shows a well-developed art both in conception and execution, an art which must have taken several centuries to reach that stage. Further there is a close resemblance in matters of decorative detail between the figures painted in this fresco and the statuary carved on the façades, walls, and pillars of the *chaityas* at Kondane, Bedsa, and Karle.

The artist has attempted to present human life in all its aspects, religious as well as worldly, and the portrayal of the figures in the present fresco expresses not only spiritual feeling, but also a joyful outlook on the beautiful features of the world. The painting, apart from its high intellectual qualities, exhibits workmanship marked by much grace and beauty.

the native population. Andhras, or the figures represented in the early sculpture and paintings of the Deccan, thus represent a hybrid race, a mixture of Scythians and the early inhabitants of the Deccan.

<sup>1</sup> In the early sculpture of the Deccan the above style of dressing the hair of the princes and noblemen is quite common. Round the heads of *rājās* and ministers halos and crowns of actual serpent-hoods are also to be seen.

The latter were emblematic, either of their mythical descent from a serpent-king, or of their representing a fabulous being, that is a water-spirit, in human form.

<sup>2</sup> Over the doorway of Cave XVII the seven *Mānushi* Buddhas and Maitrēya are shown sitting in meditation under different trees, among which the banyan and mango are also included (Plates LXIX-LXX).



The colours used in this fresco comprise yellow-ochre, red-ochre, *terre-verte*, and lamp-black. For the lower lip and the corners of the eye the artist has used a kind of bright vermillion apparently made from red-ochre. To indicate light and shade he has not, however, used any light or dark colour washes such as we notice in later frescoes of Caves I and II. The outline of the bodies is in dark red or black, and the drawing is firm and graceful, the bodies having been shown in the round, not dead and static, but pulsating with life.<sup>1</sup>

## THE ROYAL PARTY WORSHIPPING A *STŪPA*: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

*Plates XXIV b and XXVIII a*

*The subject is painted on the left wall of Cave X, behind pillars 9 to 11.*

THE story of the visit of the *rāja* seems to have been continued, although the scene has been shifted from the Bodhi-tree to a *stūpa*, but it is not unlikely that both may be in the sacred area where Gautama received enlightenment. The *stūpa* is crowned with a flag and an umbrella, and further to indicate its sacredness the artist has painted an *apsaras* (flying celestial nymph) on either side of it. The *apsarases* are dressed like human beings, whom they resemble in body also. In Buddhism human nature forms the keynote of the character of gods and goddesses in all their actions, and it is because of this feature of the religion that Buddhist doctrine and art appeal so much even to a layman.

Commencing from the left, we notice ten votaries worshipping the *stūpa* in a respectful attitude, having joined their hands together and holding them in front. The styles of their headgear, ornaments, and garments are the same as those of the group of votaries in Cave IX (Plates XV and XVI).<sup>2</sup> Four figures of the votaries are seen on the right of the *stūpa* as well, and there may have been more, for a large gap, caused by the peeling away of the fresco, is noticed beyond these four figures. There is a mango tree in the background on the left side, which shows the eagerness of the artist to paint the trees sacred to the Buddhist as frequently as possible. The green foliage of these trees also served the artistic purpose of showing the human figures in lighter colours with great clearness.

<sup>1</sup> The colour-plate XXVI gives a poor idea of the drawing; but it is better seen in monochrome plates XXV, XXVII, and XXVIII *a* and also in the tracing (Pl. XXIV).  
<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 15-17.



## THE ROYAL PARTY PASSING THROUGH A GATEWAY: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

### *Plate XXIVc*

*The scene is painted on the left wall of Cave X, behind pillars 11 to 15.*

THE present subject is a continuation of the last, although it begins after a large gap in the fresco, wherein only one head is left, the rest of the figures representing the royal party having completely decayed. The portion in which the drawing can be made out with certainty first shows an umbrella, and close to it a mango tree. Below the latter are four heads, one of the guard with the special headgear which has been described above (*supra*, p. 25). The two heads below this are probably those of the *rājā* and of his minister, or of his son. The fourth head is just in front of the trunk of the tree, and can be made out from the turban; otherwise it has almost perished. To the right of these figures is an areca-nut tree, of which the slender trunk and cluster of branches at the top have been painted quite realistically. The mango tree is shown laden with fruit of a round variety.

Farther to the right is a *torāṇa* through which the *rājā* and his party are shown passing. The design of the *torāṇa* is the same as that of the gateways of Sanchi, but the cross-bars supporting the horizontal curvilinear beams at the top have not all been fixed to the latter vertically. Two of them, one at each end, have a slant, evidently to add strength to the wooden frame of the *torāṇa*. At Sanchi the middle bars are arranged vertically, perhaps to keep openings of uniform size for the insertion of the figurines which are to be seen there. One of the royal party is just passing through the gateway,<sup>1</sup> while several others are seen outside it, one of whom holds a double-edged sword in his right hand and a shield or a crown in the left. Shields of a rectangular form with a curve in the middle are painted in several caves at Ajanta, but the purpose of the trefoil design at the back is not clear; it may represent the conventional coils of the string for hanging the shield round the arm and back (?). Swords with double edges and a broad end were used in the Deccan up to quite recent times, and several specimens of them are in the Hyderabad Museum. They are called *qam'a*, the weapon of destruction. The painting of the sword and the other weapon in such a prominent manner may indicate the resumption of the kingly role by the *rājā* on his coming out of the sacred precincts of the *stūpa*. Another attendant, to the right proper of the one bearing the sword and shield, has raised his hand and made a loop with his thumb and forefinger, perhaps to indicate to the crowd awaiting the return of the *rājā* outside the *stūpa*, that he has been initiated into the Doctrine, or performed his religious mission successfully. To mark the boundary of the sacred precincts of the *stūpa* the artist has painted an upright stone of an irregular shape and also a mango tree. Below the latter an elephant may be seen, which has raised its trunk to salute the *rājā*. The head of the elephant has been finished in an artistic

<sup>1</sup> Only the top part of his headgear is visible; the rest of the figure has disappeared with the peeling away of the fresco.



manner, the hair on its skull being shown by fine brush-lines. The figure riding on the elephant holds a goad in his right hand.

The grouping of the figures in the right half of the fresco appears to be somewhat confusing. There are two processions, one approaching the *stūpa* and the other returning from it. In both of them are seen royal personages, riding on elephants and accompanied by umbrella- and *chaurī*-bearers. The presence of the guard with the special headgear (*supra*, p. 28) in both the processions, as the bearer either of the *chaurī* or the umbrella, leads to the surmise that they represent the arrival and return of the same *rājā*, who may be identified with one of the Andhra kings of the second century B.C. (? *Śrī-Śātakarṇi*<sup>1</sup>). Such a visit to Gaya, the place of the Buddha's enlightenment, or to Sanchi, where, according to a contemporary inscription, the southern gateway was built by the sculptors of *Śrī-Śātakarṇi*, cannot be regarded as improbable. A close study of the fresco further reveals that the *rājā* near the right end of the painting has in front of him, on the head of the elephant on which he is riding, a vase with a leaf or a branch of a tree rising from it. Will it be too much to fancy that the *rājā* is carrying a branch of the Bodhi-tree with a view to planting it at his own capital? There is no doubt that the figure holding the vase is that of the *rājā*, for the guard with the special headgear is seen with an umbrella behind his royal master (Plate XXIV<sub>c</sub>).

## THE *ŚYĀMA* (*SĀMA*) *JĀTAKA*

Plates XXVIII *b* and XXIX *a-b*

*The story is painted in four episodes on the right wall of Cave X, behind pillars 11 to 15.*

THE principal events shown in this fresco tally in considerable detail with the version given in the *Jātaka*.<sup>2</sup> Commencing from the left side, we notice the *Rājā* of Benares, Piliyakkha, shooting an arrow. He is accompanied by five fully dressed attendants, whose headgear is like his own, and by five other retainers who are scantily dressed, wearing only

<sup>1</sup> This king was contemporary with Khāravēla, king of Kalinga. 'Twice, it appears, had *Śātakarṇi* proclaimed his suzerainty by the performance of the horse-sacrifice; and on one of these occasions at least, the victory thus celebrated must have been at the expense of *Çuṅgas*, if we are right in supposing that the appearance of the Andhras of South India in the dynastic lists of the *Purāṇas* indicates that, at some period, they held the position of suzerains in Northern India', *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i, pp. 530-1.

<sup>2</sup> No. 540 (Cowell and Rouse, vi. pp. 38-52). The story may be summarized as follows: Once the Bodhisattva was born in a miraculous way as the son, named *Suvaṇṇa-Sāma* (*Śyāma*), of a hunter and his wife, who had renounced the world and were living the life of anchorites. It so

happened that for a sin committed in former times the parents lost both their eyes, and they became entirely dependent upon their young son. From that time *Śyāma* supplied all their wants and took the utmost care of his helpless parents. Once when *Śyāma* went to the river to fetch water, the king of Benares, who was out hunting in the forest, came to the river from which *Śyāma* had just filled his water-jar, and through mere curiosity to find out what kind of being the latter was, let fly a poisoned arrow and fatally hit the Bodhisattva. Hearing that the Great Being was lamenting the fate of his blind parents now deprived of his care, the king promised to take his place and take care of them. Fortunately in the end, by the intervention of a goddess, not only was *Śyāma* restored to life, but the blind parents regained their sight.



a loin-cloth. They are, however, armed with spears and bows like the other attendants, who are fully dressed. Three of these soldiers are further armed with shields of rhinoceros-skin, the wrinkles of which have been shown by the painter in a conventional manner. The shape of the shield is somewhat unusual, being round at one end and gradually increasing in width lengthwise. The horse of the rājā, from which he has alighted to take aim, is seen behind him. It is a stout animal, fully harnessed, except for stirrups which are not found even in the later frescoes of Ajanta.<sup>1</sup> The legs of the horse are rather clumsily drawn, and as the portrayal of horses is always poor at Ajanta, it appears that this animal was not a favourite subject with the artists of that place. In contrast to it the figure of the rājā shows much skill and a close acquaintance of the artist with archery. In drawing the string of the bow the right hand almost touches the ear, while the left arm is stretched at full length. The rājā, further to exert himself to the full, has bent his left knee and stretched the right leg behind. The tension of the muscles can be seen in the original fresco indicated by brush-lines near the joints of the elbow. The rājā is wearing a long coat with short sleeves and has a girdle round his waist. There are two banana trees in front of the rājā towards the right side of the painting, and from the top of one of them a male figure, apparently a forest-spirit,<sup>2</sup> is making a sign to the rājā not to shoot the arrow. But the warning evidently came too late, for in the next episode, painted between the two banana trees, we see the young Śyāma holding a pitcher of water on his left shoulder, while the poisoned arrow shot by the rājā has wounded him in the right side and its point has come out from the left, having pierced his heart. The rājā is seen close to him repenting his folly and taking a vow to serve the blind parents of Śyāma with all the devotion of the latter during the rest of their lives. The figure of Śyāma has been drawn with all the grace of youth.

In the third episode we notice the blind parents feeling the wounded body of Śyāma before making the solemn asseveration in concert with Bahusodarī, the goddess, whose miraculous power restored not only Śyāma to life but the eyesight of his blind parents. Śyāma thus restored to life is seen addressing the rājā, who is astonished by the miracle. This state of mind has been indicated by the stoop of the rājā's body and the lowering of his arms. Close to the rājā is another figure, which may be that of the spirit who warned the rājā against injuring Śyāma.<sup>3</sup>

According to the *Jātaka*, during Śyāma's residence in the forest deer became much attached to him, and they followed him when he went out to gather fruit or fetch water for his blind parents. In the fresco they have been shown running towards the cottage of Śyāma, when he

<sup>1</sup> The various parts of the harness are almost the same as those shown on the horses painted in the *Mahā-janaka Jātaka*, Cave I, and *Vidhura-paṇḍita Jātaka*, Cave II. The frescoes of the latter two caves, however, belong to the fifth century A.D. *Ajanta*, i. 19 (f.n. 3), and ii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *Jātaka*, Bahusodarī, a daughter of the gods, who dwelt in the Gandamādana mountain, loved Śyāma like a son. She was grieved to see him wounded, and ultimately by her solemn asseveration suc-

ceeded in overpowering the poison of the arrow in Śyāma's body and in restoring him to life (Cowell, vi. 47). But here the figure represented on the tree is male and not female as in the *Jātaka*.

<sup>3</sup> Below the figures of the blind parents of Śyāma the head of a Buddha with two attendants may be seen. The latter figures have been much damaged by the effect of moisture; but they are, however, of a much later date, probably of the sixth century A.D.



was wounded by the arrow shot by the *rājā*, as if to inform his blind parents of the mishap. The galloping of the deer has been shown in a very faithful manner, and although the colours are somewhat faint, the outlines can be made out (XXIX *b*). The reconstruction of a pair of these deer, as reproduced by Griffiths (i, Fig. 24, p. 13), gives a fair idea of the skill of the artists of Ajanta in painting the denizens of the forest, particularly those which are associated with the life of the Buddha in his previous births.

In the fourth or last episode we see Śyāma sitting on a deer-skin in front of his cottage and teaching 'the ten duties of a king and the five precepts' to the *rājā*, who is listening to the sermon of the Bodhisattva with attention.<sup>1</sup> In front of Śyāma are also a buck and a doe gazing at him with meek affection.

The design of the cottage may interest the student of early Indian architecture. It has a circular base with a vaulted roof of the same shape. The wall of the base comprises a framework of upright wooden posts with circular bands of cane or bamboo round the posts in the middle as well as at the top, whence the vault of the roof springs. The panels formed by the vertical positions of the posts and the horizontal courses of the curvilinear bands have been covered with leaves of trees. The door has a curvilinear lintel in the style of the architraves of the *torāṇas* of the religious buildings of those days. The cottage is built at the edge of a pond, in which ducks and lotus-plants may be seen.

The story in the *Jātaka*, besides the charm of narration, has certain dramatic qualities, which the artist has admirably reproduced in the fresco. For instance, the foolish whim of the *rājā* to ascertain the nature of Śyāma—'Is he a god or a *nāga*?'—the fortitude of the latter, the wailing of Śyāma's parents, the nimble movement of the deer, and above all the note of affection and love which unites even animals with human beings. The figure of Śyāma carrying the pitcher of water has all the grace which Greek sculptors gave to their statues of gods; while the head of the father of Śyāma indicates the 'pathos' which we find in the Italian paintings of the renaissance period, notably in the portraits of Jesus Christ. The figures of deer are a fine example of animal study. The fresco has no inscription; but the story represents a period of Buddhist mythological literature which for its rich imagery and highly conventionalized form of religious precepts cannot be placed earlier than the Christian era. Like the *Shaḍ-Danta Jātaka* fresco painted on the rock-wall next to it, this fresco may belong to the third or the fourth century A.D.

<sup>1</sup> The painter has shown a quiver full of arrows on the back of the *rājā* as a part of his accoutrement.



# THE SHAD-DANTA (CHHADDANTA) JĀTAKA, OR THE STORY OF THE SIX-TUSKED ELEPHANT

## Plates XXX-XXXIV

*The story is painted on the back wall of the right aisle in Cave X, behind pillars 2 to 12. The painting, like that on the back wall of the left aisle, is much damaged, being scribbled over by ignorant visitors, who committed this vandalism before the establishment of the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad.<sup>1</sup> The subject is reproduced in five plates. One of them gives an outline of the entire painting, and four represent photographs in monochrome taken direct from the rock-wall.*

THE several episodes of the story as painted on the rock-wall agree even in minor detail with the version given in the *Jātaka*.<sup>2</sup> For instance the playing of the large herd of elephants in a lotus lake and their bedecking their chief after his bath with flowers, or the

<sup>1</sup> Not only had the accumulation of rain-water inside the cave for hundreds of years damaged the lower part of the rock-wall on which the subject is painted; but the humidity had also loosened the layer of colours. The fresco has been thoroughly conserved and protected by a glass frame fixed into the original rock-wall.

<sup>2</sup> The principal incidents as given in the *Jātaka* may be summed up thus: Once the Bodhisattva was born as a royal elephant of pure white skin with red feet and face. As he grew up in years he assumed colossal dimensions, measuring 88 cubits in height and 120 cubits in length. He had a trunk 58 cubits long, and six tusks, each being 15 cubits in circumference and 30 in length. The royal elephant had taken up his abode in a golden cave situated near a large lake. The latter had beautiful surroundings, lotus-growths being in the immediate vicinity, while a thick forest of stately trees formed the outskirts. The royal elephant had a herd of 8,000 who obeyed his commands, and among them were his two favourite wives, named Chulla-subhaddā and Mahā-subhaddā. Once it was reported to him that the great *sāl* grove was in flower. The royal elephant accompanied by his following went over to it and sportively struck with his frontal globe a *sāl* tree in full bloom. 'At that moment Chulla-subhaddā stood to windward, and dry twigs mixed with dead leaves and red ants fell upon her person. But Mahā-subhaddā stood to leeward, and flowers with pollen and stalks and green leaves fell on her.' Through feelings of jealousy it occurred to Chulla-subhaddā that the royal elephant had done that purposely, and she conceived a grudge against the Bodhisattva. Accordingly she offered a prayer to this effect: 'Hereafter, when I pass hence, may I be reborn as a royal maiden and on coming of age may I attain to the dignity of the queen consort to the Rājā of Benares. Then I shall be dear and charming in his eyes and arrange

to send under the royal command a hunter with a poisoned arrow to wound and slay this elephant, and thus may I be able to have brought to me a pair of his tusks that emit six-coloured rays.' The prayer of Chulla-subhaddā was granted, and in her next life she was born as a royal maiden and married to the Rājā of Benares. She did not forget her desire for revenge, and pretending to be sick she told her husband that until the tusks of an elephant which she had seen in her dream were brought to her she would not recover from her illness.

Dreaming, methought an elephant I saw  
Six-tusked and white without a flaw;  
His tusks I crave and fain would have:  
Nought else avails this life to save.

The wish of Subhaddā was carried out, and the king sent for hunters who dwelt in his territory and who numbered as many as sixty thousand. One of them, named Sonuttara, had once been an enemy of the Great Being. Subhaddā selected him and pointed out the route leading to the golden cliff beyond which the abode of the royal elephant was situated. Sonuttara, after traversing a long distance and climbing several hills, reached the golden cliff, whence he observed the royal elephant. The hunter waited for an opportunity and dug a pit to conceal himself at the place where the royal elephant used to come after his bath. Sonuttara shot a poisonous arrow from the pit and wounded the Bodhisattva, but when he attempted to cut out his colossal tusks with his saw he did not succeed. The royal elephant, although in great agony, yet showed mercy to the hunter, and seizing the saw with his trunk moved it backwards and forwards and cut off the tusks. Then bidding the hunter take the tusks, the Bodhisattva observed: 'I do not give you these, friend hunter, because I do not value them, but the tusks of omniscience are a hundred thousand times dearer to



favourite resort of the Bodhisattva under a colossal banyan tree (Plate XXX *b*) alluded to in the *Jātaka* by the following lines :

A royal banyan tree whose roots  
Yield vigour to eight thousand shoots.

The painter, however, has changed the order of the episodes on the rock-wall: he begins with the wild life of elephants in an impenetrable forest with marshy soil infested by alligators and pythons (Plate XXX *a*), and terminates with palace-scenes crowded with human figures and a royal procession to a place of worship comprising a *stūpa* and a *vihāra* (Plate XXX *c*). In the middle (Plate XXX *b*) he has delineated the bath of the royal elephant in the lotus-lake and his favourite resort under a banyan tree, where he was first sighted by the hunter, Sonuttara. This arrangement has a certain significance from the point of view of the artist, who for an impressive demonstration of his skill has kept the scenes relating to animal life and to beauty of natural scenery almost separate from those depicting human feelings wherein the gloom of pathos is repelled by the light of religious ideals.

Commencing from the left, behind pillars 11-12 we notice a python encircling the trunk of a tree. He has caught one of the hind legs of an elephant, which is in great agony and through fear has excreted. In order to extricate himself from the python the elephant is struggling hard, and the painter, to show his desperate efforts, has drawn the animal with his head and trunk placed on the ground and his forelegs bent forward in a firm manner. Several elephants are seen coming to rescue their companion from the monster; their trunks are raised, indicating that they are shrieking in response to the cry of the attacked elephant for help. Above this scene an elephant is crushing an alligator which is lying on its back with its jaws wide open as if groaning through pain. The elephant has placed one of his fore-legs on the alligator and is exerting further pressure with his trunk.

Proceeding towards the right, we notice the royal elephant, which has been painted of a much larger size than the other animals. He further bears all the distinguishing features given in the *Jātaka*, such as the six tusks and the white skin, the latter bedecked with the pollen of flowers, shown in clear pinkish spots in the fresco. The figure of the elephant has been drawn with great skill, and the raised tail indicates that the animal has scented danger lying ahead. The royal elephant is attended by several of his herd, and among them those who are in front of him have raised their trunks as a warning to the chief against the impending peril.<sup>1</sup>

Farther to the right is the scene where the royal elephant is lying prostrate and the hunter, Sonuttara, is cutting out his tusks with a saw. The fresco is damaged at this place, but the saw placed on the tusks of the right side of the head is fairly clear. The hunter is dressed in a long coat with short sleeves, the material of the coat being striped. In the back-

me than these are, and may this meritorious act be to me the cause of attaining omniscience.' When the tusks were brought by the hunter to Subhaddā, she was filled with grief at the sight of them, remembering that they were the tusks of one who had been her dear lord in her previous

existence. She was so much overwhelmed with sorrow that she died of a broken heart on that very day. Cowell, *Jātaka*, No. 514, vol. v, pp. 20-31.

<sup>1</sup> Elephants raise their trunks and shriek as soon as they perceive an intruder in their forest haunts.



ground of the painting are some trees from which birds are watching the cruel act of the hunter. The fresco is damaged at this place also, but the tail-feathers and the body of a peacock can easily be made out. Under the trees a companion of Sonuttara may also be seen, who is tying the tusks, which have already been cut, to a bamboo with a rope. The sandals worn by this hunter are of the same pattern as those used by country-folk in the Deccan at the present time. His turban and hair are of course of the early Indian style, such as is noticed in the earlier Buddhist caves of Western India, or at the *stūpas* of Sanchi and Bharhut. Farther to the right we see the same hunter carrying the tusks of the royal elephant hung in slings at each end of a bamboo pole (Plate XXX *a*).

Farther to the right is painted the incident where a favourite attendant of the Bodhisattva had plucked a large lotus from the lake and presented it to the latter. The Bodhisattva taking the flower in his trunk, sprinkled the pollen on his forehead and gave the flower to Mahā-subhaddā, which act further enraged his other wife, Chulla-subhaddā.<sup>1</sup> The Bodhisattva is shown in the fresco holding a large flower and ready to present it to another elephant, who apparently represents Mahā-subhaddā. The trunk of the latter elephant is raised and almost touches that of her mate, to show that she is prepared to receive the gift.<sup>2</sup> The drawing of the royal elephant and his companions displays considerable freedom of movement, which quality is better illustrated in the next scene to the right representing the bathing of the elephants in the lotus-pool (Plates XXX *b* and XXXII *a*).

In the *Shad-Danta Jātaka* the lake is described as being surrounded by fields of lotuses of various hues, extending for several leagues.<sup>3</sup> The painter has tried to indicate the abundance of lotus-growth by filling up the background of the lake-scene with lotus-flowers of various shapes and in different stages of bloom. The elephant, on account of its colossal size, peculiar form, and uncanny intelligence and habits, has been a favourite theme of the early Deccan painter and sculptor, and in this scene also the artist has used much imagination in depicting their trunks raised and twisted in a variety of forms. The Bodhisattva is easily recognized among the herd by his six tusks and large size. He is further bedecked with lotus-flowers, and his white skin sprinkled over with pollen.

The lake-scene is separated from the next by a *sāl* tree (?) which is in blossom. The *sāl* tree is apparently the one referred to in the *Jātaka*, which the Bodhisattva had shaken and from which accidentally flowers and green shoots fell over Mahā-subhaddā, and ants and dry leaves over Chulla-subhaddā. In the fresco flowers are shown falling from the tree. The Bodhisattva himself is painted standing under a large banyan tree, which according to the story was his favourite shelter during summer.<sup>4</sup> He is accompanied by his herd, in which a calf-elephant may also be noticed, standing near the *sāl* tree at the beginning of the scene. In this subject the artist has exhibited extraordinary skill in painting the leaves and shoots of the banyan. The leaves are dark green in the original fresco, but some are reddish, showing

<sup>1</sup> Cowell, vol. v, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Below this scene there was another which is destroyed now, only the crowns of the heads of some human figures being visible. The cornice of a building can also be

traced, on which an inscription is painted. For the text and date of the inscription see Appendix, pp. 90 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cowell, vol. v, pp. 20-1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.



autumnal tints. The shoots are pink-brown, and their wavy form and branching into thinner shoots in the middle or near the end are very characteristic. The attendants of the Bodhisattva stand round him between the shoots of the tree, grouped with great effect. Towards the right of the banyan tree are conventional bands, apparently representing the golden cliff of the *Jātaka*, from the top of which a hunter armed with a bow is looking towards the Bodhisattva. Below, in the midst of conventional bands, is a niche containing the figure of a young Buddha (Bodhisattva ?) with another figure representing a woman, lying full-stretched before him. These two figures obviously represent the death-scene of Chulla-subhaddā, wife of the Shaḍ-Danta elephant, both being shown in human form. The idea of the artist in painting these two figures below the hunter is that when the Bodhisattva noticed the hunter, Sonuttara, on the cliff, he at once detected his motive in coming there and thought of the death of Chulla-subhaddā and the malice which she had wrongly borne towards him.<sup>1</sup> The panel is interesting as imparting a certain vividness to the scene, but its chief importance lies in the conventional treatment of the hair of the Bodhisattva, which is dressed in small curls with a knot at the top (Plate XXX*b*). Figures of the Buddha or of Bodhisattvas with hair of this style are not to be found in the Deccan until the third century A.D., on the decline of the Andhra dynasty and its replacement by the Vākāṭakas.

The end of the last scene is marked by a tree on which two peafowls are perched. The hills, represented by conventional bands, continue towards the right, and on a ledge two women are seen, round whose heads there are embroidered kerchiefs, or metal ornaments, similar in design to those worn by two ladies in the scene 'Nāga Rājā before the Bodhi-tree' (Plates XXV*a* and XXVI). They are probably watching the return of the hunter with the tusks of the royal elephant, for the next scene represents the palace of the king of Benares (Plate XXX*c*). In this scene the hunter Sonuttara and his companion are shown to have brought the tusks, but Subhaddā faints at the sight of them, being smitten by the thought of her cruelty to one who was her lord in a previous existence. The Rājā of Benares, who is seated next to the queen, is supporting her by placing one of his hands behind her back and by holding with the other her right shoulder. One maid is fanning her, another has brought water to pour on her head or to sprinkle on her face, another nearest to Subhaddā is offering a drink to her, and another at the right end of the scene has placed her hand on her mouth in the characteristic Indian style to express anxiety and sorrow. The maid holding the umbrella over the head of the rājā is looking towards the tusks, the sight of which has struck the entire court with consternation. A woman who is squatting on the floor is massaging the soles of Subhaddā in order to revive her consciousness. The artist has succeeded fully in imparting a dramatic effect to the scene; but his skill is to be admired still more in the excellent grouping of the figures and their natural poses. The drawing is perfect, and its charm is enhanced by the fine brush-work shown in the delineation of the ornaments and coiffure. In regard to the latter features and the dress of both the male and female figures there is a striking resemblance

<sup>1</sup> According to the legend Shaḍ-Danta lake was girt about by seven ranges of mountains of varying heights and bearing special names—Little Black Mountain, Great

Black Mountain, Water Mountain, Moon Mountain, Sun Mountain, Jewel Mountain, and Golden Mountain. The last was seven leagues in height. Cowell, vol. v, p. 21.



between this fresco and the one painted on the left wall of the cave, that is 'the Rājā before the Bodhi-tree', referred to above. It appears that the decorative detail and general style of painting remained almost on a uniform level from about the second century B.C. to the first quarter or middle of the third century A.D.

The next scene again lies in the palace, and it represents the Rājā of Benares and Queen Subhaddā commanding the hunters to bring the tusks of the Shaḍ-Danta elephant. She is giving them necessary directions regarding the route and other connected matters. The crouching poses of the hunters indicate that they are willing to carry out the royal orders. Close to the hunters is a tall heavy figure holding a long staff. He is apparently the royal guard. In the background is a tree laden with fruit. The fruit and leaves of this tree resemble those of a mango. The figure of the queen is considerably damaged in the fresco, but the right hand which is preserved shows that she has raised her forefinger and middle finger jointly as if to give certain instructions to the hunters regarding their task. The rājā is seated to the left of Subhaddā on a royal chair, the side-railing of which is probably of chased metal-work. An amazon is holding an umbrella over the head of the rājā, while a woman of medium stature behind the royal pair holds a fly-whisk. The presence of these two attendants indicates that the court ceremonial was fairly developed at the time. The adjoining scene towards the right shows the bedroom of the queen, where she is delineated in a pensive mood, seated on a stool of wicker-work near her bedstead. Two maids are standing behind her, and two more are sitting on the floor. The latter two are looking anxiously at the face of the queen. The rājā is standing at the head of the bed, and his pose indicates that he is trying to console the queen. The scene represents Subhaddā's pretended illness and her telling the rājā that she would not recover until the tusks of the royal elephant which she had seen in the dream were brought to her. The poses of the maids show plasticity of form combined with artistic grace. The feet of the bedstead appear to have been turned on a lathe, and are of a design to be found even to-day (Plate XXXc). The shapes of the two brass ewers, one placed near the bedstead and another near the maid sitting close to the feet of the rājā, are also interesting, because water-vessels of this form are still used in the Madras and Bengal Provinces.

The last scene shows a procession in which the rājā, with the queen and her maids, is proceeding to a *chaitya* for worship. This scene is not included in the *Jātaka*, and may refer to the visit of the rājā to the *chaitya* after his marriage to Subhaddā. The surmise is based on the close proximity of this scene to the last, in which Subhaddā, having won the affection of the rājā, feigns illness and induces him to send hunters to kill the Shaḍ-Danta elephant.<sup>1</sup> The architectural style of the *chaitya* shows it to be a copy of Cave X when its front was complete and had not deteriorated (Plate XXIII). There is a *stūpa* to the left of

<sup>1</sup> Some scholars have suggested that the story as painted at Ajanta differs in its concluding part from the *Jātaka* version. Subhaddā did not die but only fainted, and as a recompense for her cruel act she ordered the building of a *chaitya* and a *stūpa*, the latter over the dead body of

the royal elephant. The procession, according to this interpretation, shows the rājā and the rānī going to the *stūpa* to pay their respects to the last remains of the Bodhi-sattva.



the *chaitya*, the former decorated with flags. Although this scene is much damaged, the figures of the maids following the *rājā* convey movement very effectively.

The high qualities of artistic conception and technical skill as exhibited in the delineation of this *Jātaka* make the painting an important landmark in the history of the art of Ajanta, particularly in view of the fact that the features and dress of the *dramatis personae* are non-Āryan.

## FIGURES OF THE BUDDHA

### *Plates XXXV-XXXVII*

*The figures reproduced in the plates are painted on pillar 5 of the right row and pillars 6 and 18 of the left row. As the original colours of some figures are in excellent condition, two subjects, one representing the Buddha and the other the Great Being with a one-eyed monk, are reproduced in colour (Plate XXXVI).*

THE *dāgoba*, the pillars, and the ceiling of the aisles bear remains of painting, which from its style appears to be of a later date than the work on the back walls of the aisles studied above.<sup>1</sup> The painting on the *dāgoba* has almost perished, excepting a fragment which has recently been preserved by the Department.<sup>2</sup> The aisles contain lotus-designs and figures of the Buddha in a seated posture. The latter possess no special artistic or iconographic significance, and have been painted merely for decorative purposes.

The figures painted on pillars show much variety, and several of them display art of a high order. The pillars also bear some lovely creeper and floral designs, the best examples of which are to be noticed on the fifth, sixth, and seventh pillars of the right row. Time and the inclemencies of weather have wrought much havoc in this cave, and as a result many pillars have completely decayed, and the frescoes now survive only on pillars 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 18 of the left row and on pillars 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 14 of the right row.

In selecting the subjects for the plates the iconographic and artistic import of the specimens have been duly considered and repetition avoided by leaving out duplicates. To begin with the left side of the hall, pillar 5 (Plate XXXV *a*) bears representations of the Buddha both standing and seated, arranged on the pillar one above the other in alternating panels. The art is of a conventional religious type, the seated figures being in the *dharmachakra* or teaching attitude, and those standing in the *bhūsparśa* or earth-touching attitude, for the right hand hangs low. The hair of the two figures near the bottom, shows distinct influence of the

<sup>1</sup> This view is supported by several inscriptions painted on pillars along with the figures of the Buddha. The majority of these are in fifth-century A.D. characters. For further information regarding these inscriptions see Appendix, pp. 92, 93.

<sup>2</sup> The portion of the fresco which has been preserved contains a deep balcony from which a boy leans out and points to something, perhaps to the *stūpa*. He is

wearing a long white coat and a skull-cap. Below the figure of the lad is another looking upwards. In the balcony besides the boy there are two other persons, one of them being a monk and the other a nun. The latter is also dressed like a hermit. The interesting feature of the painting is a creeper, or the thin branches of a tree, hanging down the balcony, with red bark, green leaves, and white flowers.



sculpture of North-West India, and the lower figure of these two, clad in a toga, indicates further affinity with the Indo-Greek School.

The influence of the North-West is clearer in the representation of the Buddha in Plate XXXV *b*, where besides the toga and the conventional hair the features are totally different from those of the Deccan people, being North-West Indian, perhaps with a blend of Chinese element in them.<sup>1</sup> This pillar also bears on its upper part a creeper and a floral design, both being quite pleasing to the eye. The line-work along the margins of panels containing the figures of the Buddha perhaps represents emanation of light in a conventional manner.

Passing on to Plate XXXVI, the colour-subject (*a*) represents the Buddha in the *dharmachakra* attitude. A one-eyed monk of a fair complexion is standing in front of him, while another has knelt down holding a garland in his hands. The eyes of the Buddha are shown partly open as if he were deeply absorbed in meditation, while those of the kneeling monk are wide open and show the light of hope as if he were expecting the acceptance of his offering by the Buddha. The expression on the face of the one-eyed monk indicates mental calm; and his devotion to the Great Being is shown by his attitude of extreme respect, with head inclined and hands joined together. The features of this monk have been drawn with considerable skill, particularly the painting of the head in profile, which at once strikes the observer. The Buddha is seated on a cushion placed on a low wooden stool (?), and has a halo from which light is emanating. The foreground is painted dark red besprinkled with white flowers, representing the mud floor of a monastery painted with red ochre and marked with white floral designs or sprinkled over with real flowers. There is a tree over the head of the Buddha on which the green leaves are beautifully interspersed with red buds and white flowers. The colour-scheme shows a well-developed sense, and in this respect the painting marks a great advance upon the earlier frescoes of this cave. The painting from its style appears to be fifth-century (A.D.) work, which surmise is confirmed by a contemporary inscription.<sup>2</sup>

The next colour-subject (*b*) represents the Buddha standing on a conventional lotus-seat with two *bhikshus* sitting in front of him. The right hand of the Buddha is pointing towards the earth,<sup>3</sup> and with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand he has made a loop. The Buddha has a golden complexion and his features are Āryan, in contrast to those of the early frescoes of this cave and of Cave IX which represent the people of the Deccan. The modelling of the head is perfect, and the skill exhibited in the delineation of the fingers and toes with their elegant form and well-set nails indicates the love of the artist for attending to the minutest detail. Of the two *bhikshus* one is of a ruddy complexion and the other swarthy, each being represented as of short stature, probably with a view to bring into prominence the tall figure of the Great Being. For the same reason the features of the two *bhikshus* have been given coarse treatment.

The figure of the Buddha has been painted in an oval panel, the margin of which shows the reflection of light in a conventional manner. Above the figure of the Buddha is the royal

<sup>1</sup> The pillar on which this figure of the Buddha is painted is sixth in the right row from the entrance of the cave.

<sup>2</sup> Pillar 18 of the left row of the hall on which this

subject is painted bears an inscription which from the style of its script has been assigned to the fifth century A.D. See Appendix, pp. 86 ff.

<sup>3</sup> This may suggest the *bhūsparśa* attitude.



umbrella adorned with flags, and below it two cherubs who are bringing garlands from the celestial world to offer them to the Buddha. Their joyful expression is reminiscent of similar figures painted on the ceiling of Cave II and in the antechamber of Cave XVII, above the portrait of the Great Being in the well-known scene 'Mother and Child before the Buddha'.<sup>1</sup> The present subject, like the paintings of the above two caves, may be assigned to the end of the fifth century A.D.,<sup>2</sup> when the art of Ajanta reached its zenith and when an elegant form permeated by emotion could successfully be portrayed in a religious spirit by the painter.<sup>3</sup>

In Plate XXXVII there are two more representations of this important subject in monochrome, which have been included with a view to enabling the student to study more closely the outline of the drawing, which is sometimes dimmed in a colour-reproduction. In the lower part of (a) is also shown a representation of the Buddha in which light is emanating from his halo in the form of flames. The emanation of light in this style is frequently noticed in the early Islamic art of Persia<sup>4</sup> and also in Chinese paintings, but no specimen of the last two schools bearing the emanation of divine light in this style dates back to the fifth century A.D., to which period this fresco of Ajanta belongs.

## BODHISATTVA PADMAPĀṆĪ (?)

### Plate XXXIX

*The subject is painted on the back wall of the veranda, to the left of the door of the hall, in Cave XI. It is reproduced in colour.*

THIS is the main subject preserved in this cave and is therefore described first, although starting from the left corner of the back wall of the veranda fragments of several other frescoes may also be noticed, descriptions of which will follow.<sup>5</sup> The principal figure in this scene probably represents the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇī, who is generally found to the left of the shrine-door in both Buddhist sculpture and painting. The figure is much damaged, but such parts as remain show that the artist has attempted to imitate with certain variations the well-known subject of this title in Cave I, but his work both as regards artistic vision and technical

<sup>1</sup> This subject has been included in Part IV, which awaits publication.

<sup>2</sup> Cave XVII bears an inscription of Harisheṇa which on the basis of the style of its characters has been assigned by Pandit Bhagvanlal to the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century A.D. Similarly the inscriptions of Cave II, according to Mr. J. Allan, belong to the first half of the sixth century A.D. at the latest, and some are decidedly earlier. Burgess, *Buddhist Cave Temples and their Inscriptions*, pp. 128-9, and *Ajanta*, Part II, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> There is an inscription in fifth-century characters on the pillar bearing this representation of the Buddha

which has been studied by Dr. N. P. Chakravarti in the Appendix (*infra*, p. 85 ff.).

<sup>4</sup> *The Islamic Book*, Arnold and Grohmann, Pls. 58 and 62.

<sup>5</sup> The ceiling of this cave has been divided in the style of the ceilings of Caves I, II, and XVII into panels filled with geometric and floral patterns and figures of birds. The drawing is perfect and the colour schemes show good taste. The green colour has faded considerably, but the yellow and red have not changed much, although the work done in black and white has become very prominent, probably from the effect of the sun, to which the ceiling of the veranda is exposed.



skill suffers by comparison with the latter.<sup>1</sup> In the present fresco the artist has represented the Bodhisattva as stoutish and of a wan complexion, instead of the golden brown of the religious texts. The modelling of the figure is, however, good, and the left arm, which is well preserved, shows how the artist has conveyed the idea of volume by deepening the outline and using dark colours for the background. The fingers of the left hand show a delicate, sensitive nature, which characteristic is also indicated by the style in which the Bodhisattva holds the stem of the lotus with his forefinger and thumb. The buds and flowers of the lotus have been drawn with great skill. The Bodhisattva is wearing a high crown of gold set with jewels, in which sapphires are prominent. His hair is bedecked with ribbons, which have been painted as if fluttering in the breeze behind his head and round his shoulders.

To the left of the Bodhisattva there is a pair of votaries bringing offerings of flowers. The female figure has been drawn with much grace, the features, pose, ornaments, and dress all being very attractive. As regards features and decoration she appears very much like some of the female figures in Cave I, and the artist of this fresco seems to have been either a contemporary of the artists of the latter cave or an ardent admirer and imitator of their work.

Above this pair there are two *kinnaras*, heavenly musicians, with human busts and the feathery tails of birds.<sup>2</sup> They are playing on cymbals, and have appeared in the scene to greet the Bodhisattva. They have bright eyes and sharp noses, which have been made further prominent by high lights.<sup>3</sup> Above the head of the Bodhisattva, on a ledge of conventional hills, there was another pair, but the figures are almost effaced now. Below the latter, perched on a green hill, is a pair of peafowl, the golden plumes of their wings and deep green with blue spots of their tail-feathers being rendered faithfully. The female bird has lowered her neck in the characteristic style when wooing her mate.

Immediately below the peafowl are two musicians who hold cymbals in their hands. They are wearing pearl ornaments, but the upper parts of their bodies are nude and the lower covered with white sheets (*dhotīs*) with red stripes. Close to them, towards the right, are three *bhikshus* with irregular beards. They are carrying flowers to offer to the Buddha in the shrine. The paunch of the *bhikshu* in the middle is noticeably protuberant.

Coming farther down, a pair of swarthy complexion may be noticed. The pose of the female figure is attractive. Her hair has been decorated with ornaments and ribbons in a pleasing style. Below this pair is the figure of a lady wearing an embroidered kerchief or bejewelled ornament round her head. Her ear-rings with clusters of pearl-drops exhibit a style which is still in fashion in India. This lady is wearing a long coat of green material. The tailoring of the coat shows a well-developed stage in the sartorial art of the Deccan, for the collar, which is of red material, has a triangular shape over the chest and V-shaped bands over the shoulders. The lower part of the figure has completely perished, and the face is also much damaged, but

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, Part I, pp. 27-30, Pls. XXIV-XXVII.

<sup>2</sup> Between the pair of votaries and the *kinnaras* there is a spirit or some human denizen of the forest painted conventionally with a green complexion. The figure is much damaged, but the hair, dressed like that of a hermit, and the pair of shining eyes are quite clear.

<sup>3</sup> Near the heads of the *kinnaras*, towards the right, the leaves of an areca-nut tree may be noticed, which show that the artist has copied the tree in order to match the background of his painting with that of the scene in Cave I. *Ajanta*, Part I, Pl. XXIV.



the hands are beautifully drawn, particularly the fingers and nails. She has a pinkish vessel with a lid and handle in her left hand. The vessel has circular and loop-pattern designs on it.

The artist in painting the main figure has not been very successful, for as a whole it looks heavy and uninspiring. On the other hand the figures of ladies in the pairs painted on the left and right of the Bodhisattva show both neat drawing and skilful decorative work, and it appears that the artist was more of an adept in painting small figures and ornamental subjects than in drawing a large figure requiring higher qualities of intellect and technical efficiency.

## FIGURES OF THE BUDDHA AND THE BODHISATTVA (AVALOKITEŚVARA?)

### Plate XL a-b

*The figure of the Buddha (a) is painted on the back wall of the veranda, to the left of the left window, in Cave XI. The Bodhisattva (b) is painted on the same wall to the right of the door.<sup>1</sup>*

OF the two figures, that representing the Buddha (a), although much damaged, has a unique feature, that is, light in the form of wavy lines, emanating from his entire body.<sup>2</sup> In the subjects of Cave X, referred to above (*supra*, pp. 37-8), the emanation of light is shown either round the halo of the Buddha (Pls. XXXVI a and XXXVII a) or along the margin of the panel in which the figure of the Great Being is painted (Pls. XXX b and XXXVI b), and in each case in a more or less conventional manner; but here it is more realistic. The representation may refer to some occasion in the life of the Buddha when divine glory shone forth from his entire body.

The figure of the Bodhisattva (b) is again badly damaged, but the portion of the head which has survived, and is now carefully preserved by the Department, shows very striking features. They are distinctly Āryan, like those of Padmapāṇi in Cave I or Indra in Cave II.<sup>3</sup> The high lights have brought into prominence the broad forehead and sharp nose with well-curved nostrils. The use of high lights is not to be found in the earlier frescoes of Caves IX and X, and was probably practised in the fifth century A.D. for the first time. The Bodhisattva is wearing a high bejewelled crown and many pearl ornaments; the free use of the latter is also a feature of the fifth-century art of Ajanta. The figure may represent the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, but as the fresco is much damaged it is difficult to identify it with any certainty.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The veranda of this cave was at one time covered with paintings, and fragments of frescoes may still be seen on the ceiling, the frieze above the pillars, the capitals of the latter, and the back wall (Pls. XXXVIII-XL).

<sup>2</sup> The Buddha is of colossal size and has a yellowish-brown complexion. The bold black outline of the figure is intact in the original fresco. The left hand of the Buddha, in which he is holding the frilled end of his sheet, (*dhoti*) is drawn with considerable artistic effect.

<sup>3</sup> *Ajanta*, Part I, Pls. XXIV-XXVII, and Part II, Pl. IX.

<sup>4</sup> On the back wall of the veranda of this cave, besides the three subjects reproduced in Pls. XXXIX-XL, there are other frescoes. For instance to the left of the Buddha, from whose body light is emanating, there is a dim figure which can be made out by the striped material of his lower garment. Below this figure may be seen the two hands of some votary joined together in the act of adoration. The



## SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA: THE TUSHITA HEAVEN (?)

### Plates XLVI a-XLVII

*The scenes are painted on the back wall of the veranda, near its left end, close to a small door in Cave XVI. As the fresco is much damaged, it is reproduced in monochrome only (XLVII), but an outline of the drawing is also given separately (XLVI a).*

THE veranda of Cave XVI was originally decorated with frescoes, the few surviving fragments of which are to be noticed above the front row of pillars and on the left<sup>1</sup> and back walls.

The present subject comprises several scenes which have been identified by scholars as representing the descent of the Buddha from the heaven of the Tushitas,<sup>2</sup> his preaching to his mother Mahā-Māyā in the same heaven, and the gods of the thousand worlds assembling and announcing to him that the time of his rebirth into his final existence has come. The first scene is fairly clear, for above the small door the figure of the Buddha is seen among conventional clouds as if descending from heaven for his final birth.<sup>3</sup>

The next scene represents him seated on a throne in the teaching attitude (?) with a group of ladies to his left. The fresco is much damaged, but the figures of the ladies can easily be made out by their beautiful but elaborate coiffures and the artistic designs of their *sārīs*. Near the throne of the Buddha is a lady evidently of distinction, because she is sitting on a rich cushion and not squatting on the ground. She may be Mahā-Māyā, but in the Buddhist legend there is no reference to his preaching to his mother in the Tushita heaven, although among the

body of the votary has completely perished. To the right of the Buddha are bands representing hills conventionally. Above them a monkey may be noticed. Farther to the right, above the window, two figures of the Buddha and a fat cherub (*gana*) are painted. The Buddhas are clad in orange-coloured robes, and they have an attendant on either side of them and votaries near their feet. The latter are wearing pearl necklaces and loin-cloths of a striped material. The hands of the *gana* are painted in such a way as to indicate that he is descending from heaven. Above the window to the right of the door are figures of the Buddha, shown seated, which continue up to the end of the wall. The hall of this cave was also once painted, and figures of the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, and *bhikshus* may still be traced. Among these the head of a hermit painted on the back wall to the right of a cell-door shows fine modelling and brush-work. To indicate light and shade the artist has used colour-washes in a skilful manner. The hair of the hermit has also been delineated with care.

<sup>1</sup> This fresco, being much damaged, is not reproduced in the plates. However, two figures can be made out,

one with a fair complexion and the other pale brown. The head of the former is finely drawn, and high lights and jewellery are the distinguishing features. Of the brown figure the head has completely perished.

<sup>2</sup> After his penultimate birth as Viśvantara, when he realized the perfection of charity, the Bodhisattva was born as Śvetaketu, a *deva* of the Tushita heaven, where he stayed until the due time for his rebirth in his last existence. According to Buddhist sacred literature the universe from the lowest hell to the limit of existence is divided into the world of desire, the world of form, and the formless world. The Tushita heaven is the fourth of the six heavens of worldly desire. It is further a heaven for satisfied gods, and the Buddha's mother, who died seven days after his birth, was raised to it. *Vide Warren, Buddhism in Translation*, pp. 38-9, 45, and 83, and Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 28, 30-1, 36, 53, and 99.

<sup>3</sup> This scene has not been included either in the monochrome plate (XLVII) or in the outline (XLVI a).



investigations which he made when the gods announced to him that a new Buddha was to arise, his enumeration of the thirty-two qualities which his mother should possess and his choice of Mahā-Māyā to be his mother are mentioned.<sup>1</sup> The upper part of the figure representing Mahā-Māyā has decayed, but the delineation of the fingers shows that she is following the sermon of the Buddha attentively and making conventional gestures in response. She is dressed in a *sārī* of striped material, in the design of which the arrangement of a fine line along the broad one is quite artistic. The toes of her feet have also been drawn with considerable imagination, and the artist has further bedecked her with ornaments round her ankles.

There was another lady between Mahā-Māyā and the Buddha, whose figure can now be traced only by one of her feet and a part of her head. Behind Mahā-Māyā are two maids with coarse features, who are looking in a devout manner to the Buddha, holding their hands joined together towards the Great Being. One of these maids has tucked the lower end of her *sārī* behind her waist, a style still in vogue among the Marāṭhī ladies. The thin waist of this maid has been indicated by the artist in a clever manner. The other maid is clad in a *sārī* with green stripes, and her hair is dressed in an elaborate style, the curls of the locks lying spread on her shoulders. Below the two maids there is a group of five more ladies. Two of them are holding trays of flowers, another holding a circular vessel with chased work, containing victuals or spices as an offering to the Buddha; and the remaining two, one of them being at the end of the group and the other in front of them, are in the act of adoration, with heads bent down and hands joined and stretched forward in the *prañāma* (प्रणाम) posture. The attractive features of these figures are their elaborate coiffure and rich ornaments, among which the aigrette, worn by all of them alike, signifies their high position as *devīs* of the Tushita heaven. The style of coiffure, although differing in each case, shows the dressing of the hair in the form of the coils of a serpent, which are further decorated with flowers and fixed in position with ribbons.<sup>2</sup>

To the right of the throne of the Buddha are some male figures, representing the *devas* of the Tushita heaven. A portion of the head of one figure and fragments of the torsos of two others can be made out with certainty.

Below the last scene is another in which the Buddha is painted in the middle, in an effulgent oval panel (Pl. XLVI<sup>a</sup>). The head of the figure has completely perished. There are four figures wearing high crowns to the left of the Buddha and four more to his right, the latter having their hair plaited and tied up in the form of a crown. These perhaps represent the gods of the ten thousand worlds who, hearing 'the Buddha Uproar', appeared before him to announce that the time had come when he should be reborn and attain his high destiny. Some scholars have identified the gods wearing the high crowns with those belonging to Indra's heaven, and those wearing high *jaṭās* as belonging to Brahma's heaven.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 28-9.

<sup>2</sup> Behind this scene there is another, separated from the former by bands of conventional hills. The fresco has almost perished, but the portions of three figures, one male and two female, can be traced. The jewellery of these figures indicates that they represent important personages.

<sup>3</sup> Warren may also be quoted in this connexion: 'At that time, therefore, having all come together in one world, with the Cātum-Mahārājas, and with the Sakka, the Suyāma, the Santusita, the Paranimmita-Vasavatti, and the Mahā-Brahma of each several world, they approached the Future Buddha in the Tushita heaven and besought him. . . . ' *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 39.



To the left of the Buddha, besides the four crowned figures, there are fourteen more arranged in two rows one above the other. Their heads are bare, but the pearl jewellery and other ornaments which they are wearing show that they are also important personages, perhaps minor *devas* of the Tushita heaven. The fresco looks crowded with these figures, but the artist has given a different pose to each of them, and the designs of their ornaments are also different; thus there is no monotony in the treatment. The designs of the chains, pendants, and ear-rings are particularly striking, and they indicate that the goldsmith's and jeweller's crafts were highly developed at that time.

To the right of the four figures with high *jaṭās* there are five more; two of them are boys or dwarfs, one of a dark complexion and the other ruddy. The latter is holding a serpent in his hands. Of the remaining three figures of this group, which are painted below the boys, two are of a fair complexion, and of the third only the crown of the head is visible, the lower part of the body having entirely perished.

In this subject the artist has used colour-washes both to enliven the face and to produce the idea of volume in the figure. In this practice his technique resembles that of the painters of Caves I and II, which in regard to age are almost contemporary with Cave XVI, the date of which, according to an inscription of the Vākāṭaka king Harishēṇa, has been fixed some time between 475 and 500 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

## THE *SUTASOMA JĀTAKA*, OR THE STORY OF A LIONESS WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH SUDĀSA, THE KING OF BENARES

### *Plate XLVIb*

*The story was painted on the architrave, above the front pillars of the veranda, but through the ravages of time the fresco has almost completely perished, except for a fragment above pillars 1 to 3, counting from the right, the outline of which is reproduced.*

ALTHOUGH Burgess in his *Notes* (pp. 57-8) has correctly made out the detail of the scene, yet he could not identify it with the *Sutasoma Jātaka*.<sup>2</sup> The credit of the identification goes to Prof. A. Foucher, who was employed by H.E.H. the Nizam's Government to study the Ajanta paintings in 1919-20. The story seems to be a favourite one, for it is also painted in the back corridor of Cave XVII at Ajanta, and carved on a frieze in Cave III at Aurangabad. In the version painted at Ajanta, and sculptured at Aurangabad, the story

<sup>1</sup> This inscription, besides giving the genealogy of Harishēṇa, refers to Hastibhoja and his son, Varāhadeva, who served as ministers to Devasena and Harishēṇa. Further, it alludes to the dedication to a Buddhist Sangha of a cave-dwelling, containing a Buddhist temple and a hall, beautifully decorated with pillars, picture-galleries,

and sculptures. *Monograph No. 14, Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, pp. 2 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Jātaka-mālā*, No. 31; *Bhadrakalpāvadāna*, No. 34; *The Jātaka*, No. 537 (vol. v, pp. 246-79); and *Contes*, Nos. 41, 135.



begins with Sudāsa, the king of Benares, going out to hunt and losing his way in the forest. He dismounts from his horse, and while taking rest falls asleep. A lioness appears on the scene, and being captivated by the beauty of Sudāsa falls in love with him and kisses his feet. By this bodily contact the lioness in a miraculous manner conceives and gives birth to a child,<sup>1</sup> who is named Saudāsa after his father, and succeeds him in course of time as the king of Benares. The young king through the folly of his cook once tastes human flesh, and having been born from the womb of a lioness he becomes a cannibal. Kālahatthi, the commander-in-chief of the king, urges him to give up this vicious habit, but his advice falls on deaf ears and Saudāsa remains incorrigible. The subjects of the king ultimately attack him, and he runs away to the woods, where he preys upon human beings. In course of time he succeeds in capturing a number of princes, and one day he seizes also Sutasoma, who is no other than the Bodhisattva born as the heir-apparent of the king of Indraprastha. Sutasoma, before he was captured by Saudāsa, had made a promise to a Brahman to listen to his sermon, which engagement he desires to fulfil before dying to provide a morsel to satisfy the appetite of the cannibal. The solicitude of Sutasoma prevails, and he obtains a respite to go and listen to the teachings of the Brahman. The teachings endow Sutasoma with a new spiritual power, which enables him not only to protect himself but to compel Saudāsa to release the other princes whom he has captured. He also by his holy words induces the man-eater to give up his evil habit and to repent for his sins. As a reward he escorts him back to Benares and reinstates him on the throne.

On the architrave two episodes of the story can be made out, first the lioness licking the feet of Sudāsa, who is lying on a made-up bed of leaves and flowers. Flowers and leaves are scattered around the bed as well. The upper part of Sudāsa's body has perished, but the legs are intact. By the side of the bed Sudāsa's horse is standing; its arched neck and trappings attract the eye.

To the right of the above is the palace-scene in which Sudāsa is shown sitting on a royal chair. Two female attendants, holding fly-whisks, are standing behind his chair. The figures of these attendants exhibit considerable elegance in both the delineation of their bodies and the style of their ornaments. Sudāsa is holding the child born of the lioness in his lap. The figure of the child is damaged, but the back of his head and one of his shoulders can be traced. To the right of Sudāsa is a male servant who is squatting on the ground and looking eagerly at the child. The artist has given an expression of fatherly affection to the face of Sudāsa.

The fresco, although much damaged, yet both in regard to drawing and expression falls into line with the other paintings of this cave, which, as noted above (p. 44), belong to the fifth century A.D.

<sup>1</sup> Both in Cave XVII at Ajanta and in the sculptured panel in Cave III at Aurangabad the lioness is being carried in state with the child to the royal palace.



## THE DEMONS IN FRONT OF A MONASTERY: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

### *Plate XLVIII a*

*The subject is painted inside Cave XVI, in the front corridor above the small door to the left of the main entrance. As the subject is very dim, it is reproduced in outline only.*

THE painting was so thickly covered with smoke and dirt that previous investigators thought that the fresco was completely defaced; but recent cleaning operations carried out by the Department have exposed the drawing of the entire piece, which has survived other destructive agencies such as insects, bats, and moisture. The scene represents perhaps a monastery, in the court of which seven cows or oxen are seen, each of them being painted in a different style. Two of them are sitting, but the neck of one of them is turned to one side, while the other is looking straight ahead. The poses of both are easy and natural. Below them two more animals are standing and looking in the opposite direction to the other two. The muzzle and horns of one of them show that it is younger than its companion. The artist has used fine brush-lines to indicate wrinkles on the necks of these two animals. Farther down there are three more oxen or cows, two of which have chains as ornaments round their necks, while the third, which is in the middle, has lowered its neck in characteristic style. In the middle of the court near the door are three ogres, whose short ugly noses, protruding curved teeth, large bellies, and dishevelled hair show the artist's imagination in depicting their sinister character. Above these monsters is a *bhikshu*, but as his head is broken his expression cannot be studied. In the door another *bhikshu* is to be seen; he is dressed in a loose cloak. The door of the monastery is indicated by two neat square pillars adorned by plain bands of carving. Inside the monastery four figures can be made out, all of them representing monks. The figure at the top, although damaged, has a rod or some other article in the left hand.

In this subject the hair of the monsters show fine brush-work. The scene apparently represents some episode from a *jātaka* which has not been identified as yet.

## THE *HASTI JĀTAKA* (?), OR THE STORY OF THE BENEVOLENT ELEPHANT

### *Plates XLVIII b-XLIX*

*The subject is painted in the front corridor of Cave XVI, to the left of the small door towards the left of the main entrance. As the painting is dim, it has been reproduced in monochrome with an outline.*

LIKE the previous fresco (XLVIII a), this also has been cleaned recently, and two episodes of the story can be made out with certainty.<sup>1</sup> The first episode, painted on the

<sup>1</sup> Professor A. Foucher has identified the story with the latter the story may be summarized as follows:  
No. 30 of the *Jātaka-mālā*. According to the text of      Once upon a time the Bodhisattva was a mighty ele-



right, represents a party of wayfarers clad in single sheets which cover mainly the lower parts of their bodies, but the sheets are also seen in a rolled form across their chests and backs. The wayfarers have loose dishevelled hair and bulging stomachs, the latter indicating the irregular development of their bodies. The hands and fingers are well shaped, and with the latter they are making gestures, perhaps pointing to a white elephant, shown on conventional hills in front of them. On their backs they carry sacks, the tops of which, pulled over their shoulders, they grip with their left hands.

On the left side of the fresco is another scene in which the benevolent elephant is lying prostrate with his trunk stretched in front of him. Two of the wayfarers are cutting pieces of flesh from the elephant's body with large knives. The scene becomes gruesome when one of the wayfarers, second in the top row from the left, is seen with a piece of flesh in his mouth and another holding a piece in his left hand to roast it in a fire which is burning in front of him. The flames of the fire have been painted rather conventionally, but nobody can say that the drawing represents anything but fire. Behind the last two wayfarers there are two more looking eagerly to their companions who are cutting pieces of flesh with knives. Near the left end of the fresco there are three more of the party who have gone to fetch water, for below them are wavy lines representing conventionally the waters of a river or lake.

The subject is interesting only from the point of view of the story; otherwise the painting in the original fresco is somewhat flat, and the drawing also, except that of the hands, is of an inferior quality.

## THE *MAHĀ-UMMAGGA JĀTAKA*: THE MURDER OF A CHILD AND OTHER EPISODES

### *Plates L-LI*

*The subject is painted on the left wall of the front corridor and is continued on the pilaster adjoining the former. As the fresco is much damaged, it is reproduced in monochrome, but an outline of the drawing is given as a separate plate.*

THE desire expressed by Griffiths regarding the copying of this fresco some sixty years ago has been fulfilled by the Department;<sup>1</sup> but the identification of the story on the

phant living alone in a forest. One day he heard a sound of weeping and wailing, and beheld a company of seven hundred weary travellers grievously afflicted with hunger and thirst. They were terrified as he approached them. But he bade them have no fear of him, and asked who they were. They answered that they were the survivors of a thousand men who had been driven out by the king, and they were now near to perishing. The Bodhisattva, reflecting that they could not find enough food in the forest to keep them alive in passing through it, resolved to sacrifice his own body for that purpose. He therefore bade them go towards a certain mountain, below which they would find a great lake of pure water and near to it the body of an elephant; they should use the flesh of

this elephant as provision for their journey, and his bowels as bottles wherein to carry water to be drawn from the lake. Then the Bodhisattva, hastening away by another road to that mountain, flung himself down from it, and so died. When the wanderers came thither, they found the lake with his dead body near by. Some of them perceived that it was the Bodhisattva, who had sacrificed himself for their sake. They gratefully acknowledged his goodness, and in obedience to his bidding took his flesh from his body, drew water from the lake, and thus provided with drink and meat journeyed safely through the forest.

<sup>1</sup> *Notes*, p. 58.



basis of Buddhist legend has hitherto remained a problem, which has now at last been solved.

Commencing with the top left corner of the fresco, first a royal rider is noticed, who is wearing a full-sleeved coat and striped stockings, or soft leather long boots. A straight sword hangs by his left side. The trappings of the horse are complete except the stirrups, which are missing also in the trappings of the horses painted on the right wall of Cave II.<sup>1</sup> The figure of the horse shows rapid movement, for one of the hind legs is stretched backward and the other raised forward. Beside the horse is an attendant, perhaps the royal umbrella-bearer, for the long handle of the umbrella is seen in his hands. The accoutrement of the rider, particularly the striped stockings, or the soft leather long boots, indicate that at this period Scythians (*Śakas*), Parthians (*Pahlavas*), and Greeks (*Yavanas*), who had established their kingdoms in different parts of India much earlier than the date of this cave (A.D. 475-500), formed a conspicuous element of the *Sangha*, either as votaries or as patrons, and this is apparently the reason why such foreigners with their typical dresses are seen frequently on the wall-paintings of Caves I, II, and XVII.<sup>2</sup> Above the figure of the royal rider are conventional bands representing hills, between two ranges of which the eddying waters of a stream are seen, which is continued towards the right.

Below the royal rider in a plantain-grove are four figures representing apparently servants of the royal rider, listening attentively to the talk of a boy who is sitting on a ledge. Below the rocks a saddled horse without a rider may be seen. The fresco is much damaged at this place. The boy has bent forward in talking to the men, and the gesture of his hands shows that the subject of conversation is a religious theme. He is wearing a small crown on his head. The two men nearest to the boy have long hair, while the third has a Persian cap on his head. The expression of the fourth figure is somewhat wild, his hair being dishevelled, and although he is making gestures with his fingers as if to convey that he is following the sermon of the boy, yet the dagger inserted in his belt suggests that he has some sinister task to perform.

Below this scene, a little to the left, we see a man and a woman stretching the body of a child, holding him by his arms and feet. A soldier, who is fully dressed, has raised his sword to cut the boy in two. Another person with dishevelled hair is watching the scene.

But the execution of the child by some miraculous power is stopped, for lower down in the fresco we see the child again talking to two persons, one of whom is fully dressed and standing at some distance from the boy, while another is quite close to him and squatting on the ground. At the back of these figures towards the right there is a country cart, the design of the upper railing of which has not changed in India in the fifteen hundred years since this subject was painted. Above the railing there is a semicircular hood attached to the cart for protection against rain and sun, similar to those to be observed on country carts to-day. The driver, or one of the inmates of the cart, is seen in front of it.

The scene representing the river flowing between two hills mentioned above is continued on the pilaster between the front and the left corridors, and two ladies with a child are seen bathing in the river. The water is shallow here, being only knee-deep. The ladies appear to be

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, ii, p. 40. For details of the harness see i. 19, f.n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i, pp. 46-50, Pls. XXXVIII and XXXIX, and ii, pp. 9 and 29, Pls. XI a-b and XXX.



engaged in conversation, for the gesture of the right hand of the lady on the left indicates that she is inquiring about some affair from her friend. The latter holds a fruit(?) in her right hand, and appears to be preoccupied by some serious thought. The child is looking up to this lady appealingly, and his hand is stretched out as if to get the fruit from her. In painting the figures of boys or dwarfs the artists of Ajanta have always introduced something comic in the subject, and here also the delineation of the head of the boy conveys the artist's sense of humour. He has painted the head as if shaved, but some hair has been left which is twisted in the form of horns on the sides of his forehead. To the left of the two ladies who are bathing in the river there is another who is in a boat. The boat is narrow and its two ends are raised upwards in the gondola style. She is young, and her features have been drawn with care by the artist.

Above this scene are the usual bands representing hills, on which the figure of the Buddha may be seen. His hands show that he is teaching, and there are figures of some votaries in front of him. The latter are not clear because the fresco is much damaged at this place.

Below the river-scene are some houses, the barrel-shaped roofs and heavy curvilinear eaves (*chhajjā*) of which bear close resemblance to the rock-hewn shrines of this period (fifth century A.D.). The fresco farther down has decayed much, but the heads of two human figures can be made out.

The painting, although not identified, tells its story in a clear manner. Mr. Moreshwar G. Dikshit has identified the scene in Plates L-LI with certain episodes of the *Mahā-Ummagga Jātaka* (Cowell, vi, 156 ff.). This interpretation is absolutely correct, for the horse-rider on the top, towards the left (Plate L), may represent the councillor of King Vedeha, who was deputed by the latter to test the wisdom of the supernatural child Mahosadha. The lake, the garden, and the building shown in the middle of the fresco are the tank, the grove, and the palace built by Mahosadha, where, in the form of a seven-year-old child, he answered successfully the queries of the people who had assembled to examine his supernatural powers. Lower down, towards the left, is 'the riddle of the son' (Cowell, vi, 163), at the bottom 'the riddle of the chariot' (pp. 165-6), and on the right, in the bathing scene, 'the riddle of the cotton thread' (p. 162).<sup>1</sup>

## THE DYING PRINCESS: THE DESERTED WIFE OF NANDA(?)

### Plate LII

*The subject is painted in the left corridor near the pilaster between the former and the front corridor. It is reproduced in colour.*

THE scene represents the fainting or the dying of a princess, apparently at the sight of a crown which is held in the hands of a servant with a melancholy face, standing close to a pillar near the left end of the painting. As on the right side of this subject the story of the Conversion of Nanda is painted, it is not unlikely that the princess is either the wife of

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions, Indian Hist. Congress, Vth Session, 1941, pp. 567-9.*



Nanda, or 'Belle-of-the-Country', with whom he was deeply in love when he left home to join the Order.<sup>1</sup> However, the scene painted on the rock-wall tells the story in a very clear manner. Near the left end of the fresco there are two servants, one of whom is dressed in a long white coat with tight sleeves. He is wearing a white skull-cap, from the lower end of which the hair of his head is visible. The cap is of Persian style; and the dress of several figures in this fresco and the next one, in which the story of Nanda's conversion is continued, shows that the influence of the *Pahlavas* (Parthians), whose kingdoms (satrapies) were established in the provinces to the north and north-west of the Deccan even before the Christian era, not only penetrated the fine arts of Indian sculpture and architecture but also set models for improvement and change in the style of dress. The other servant alluded to above holds a crown in his hands, and his object is to report that his master (Nanda) has renounced his princely life to become a monk. The head of the figure has been drawn with great care; the eyes are almost filled with tears, and the artist, further to emphasize the expression of pathos, has placed high lights on the nose, lips, and chin.

The figure in the middle is of the princess, who is sitting on a low throne, her back resting on a round embroidered pillow and her legs stretched in front and resting on the floor. Her left elbow also is placed on the pillow, and the maid standing behind the throne is holding

<sup>1</sup> Thomas in his *Life of Buddha* (p. 101) refers to the Conversion of Nanda along with other events which took place at the time of the arrival of the Buddha in Kapilavastu after his enlightenment. Thomas writes thus:

'On the following day was being celebrated the royal consecration of Nanda, half-brother of Buddha and son of Mahāpajāpati. This seems to have been his consecration as heir apparent, such as had taken place in Buddha's case at the age of sixteen. It was also the occasion of Nanda's marriage and entering his house. Buddha came and gave Nanda his bowl to hold, and then after uttering a *mangala*, or auspicious formula, rose to go without taking back the bowl. Nanda did not venture to ask him to take it back, even when his bride appealed to him, and he followed Buddha as far as the monastery. Then Buddha asked him if he was going to leave the world, and out of reverence for the Master Nanda said, "Yes, I am going to leave the world", and Buddha ordered him to be ordained.'

On the authority of *Uddāna* (iii. 2) Thomas has further observed (f.n. 2, p. 100):

'It is not surprising that there should be a story of Nanda wishing to leave the Order. Buddha took him to the Heaven of the Thirty-three and showed him the nymphs, so superior in beauty to his own wife that he decided to stay in the Order in order to gain this heaven in another existence. But the ridicule of the other monks shamed him out of that intention.'

Warren has, however, narrated the story in considerable detail, which may be summarized as follows:

'When the Teacher made his first visit to Kapilapura, he induced his youngest brother, Nanda, to join the Order. The latter agreed to the advice of the Buddha, but being in love with Belle-of-the-Country he pined away during his residence in the monastery, so much so that his veins became prominent on his skin. The Buddha on hearing this paid a visit to Nanda and inquired whether the latter was contented with his monastic life. Nanda replied in the negative and said that he was deeply in love with Belle-of-the-Country. The Buddha afterwards flew to the Heaven of the Suite of the Thirty-three and took Nanda along with him. Sakka, the king of gods, came up with other gods and female attendants to pay obeisance to the Buddha. Among the female attendants of Sakka were five hundred pink-footed celestial nymphs whose beauty fascinated Nanda. He inquired of the Buddha as to what one should do to possess those celestial nymphs. The Teacher observed that by becoming a monk one could possess those nymphs. Nanda covetously said that if the Blessed One could be his guarantee to get the nymphs he would gladly perform the duties of a monk. The Great Being agreed to that and Nanda returned to the monastery in a better mood. He was, however, put to shame in regard to his behaviour by the disciples of the Buddha, who remarked that Nanda's making the Great Being a guarantee for the celestial nymphs meant his living a monk's life for the sake of passions. By this admonition Nanda realized his weakness and was smitten with remorse, which act blessed him with insight and he attained to saintship.' *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 269-73.



the princess with her two hands, so as to prevent her from falling down from the throne through weakness. The head of the princess is inclined on one side, and her half-closed eyes indicate both feebleness and despair. A maid to the right of the princess is looking at her face anxiously, and has placed her hand on the wrist of the princess, apparently to feel her pulse. Another maid, who is wearing a tight white *brassière*,<sup>1</sup> through panic has twisted her body in a peculiar manner. She is fanning the princess.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the expression of pathos which the artist has effectively given to the various figures of this scene, he has shown consummate skill in the drawing of the bodies and decking them with jewellery and other ornamental features. The drawing of the princess herself is a masterpiece. The well-proportioned limbs and the fine features of the young damsel display a highly cultured taste, while the deep colour-washes, high lights, and fine brush-work exhibit fully developed technical skill.

The figures of the maids also show a rich imagination and thorough competence in portraying the subject in a vivid manner. The artistically matted hair and forelocks of the fan-bearer combined with her beautiful features and scanty but *chic* dress fit in well with her writhing movement, resulting from feelings of sudden sorrow at the pathetic condition of the princess. The idea of movement is also suggested by the inclination of the large ear-rings and the pearl drops of the necklet of this maid.

The other maid, who is close to the princess and feeling her pulse, appears both by her dress and expression a lady of calm disposition, although the manner in which she is looking at the princess betrays deep concern. She is wearing a half-sleeved tunic of white material and a *sārī* or *ghaghri* (skirt) extending much below her knees. The tunic covers the upper part of her body in an unostentatious style and has no opening in front. The figure of the third maid who is standing behind the throne of the princess is not fully visible, but her head is admirably drawn: the large eyes, the sharp nose, the small but full lips, and short chin, all are shown with effect by high lights. The style of dressing the hair is different in the case of each of the three maids and the princess, but the pearl strings worn at the parting of the hair in the middle of the head by the princess, as well as by the two maids close to her, are frequently to be seen in the frescoes of Cave I (*Mahā-janaka Jātaka*),<sup>3</sup> and my surmise regarding the frescoes of Cave I, that they were executed in the fifth century A.D.,<sup>4</sup> is supported by the similarity of this adornment and also by certain technical devices, such as giving a deeper colour along the outline of drawing in order to produce the effect of roundness, or placing the high lights so as to enliven the expression.

At the back of the pavilion, towards the right, there is an open court where, under a banana tree, two more maids are seen conversing together. One of them is of a fair complexion and the other of a dark brown. The features of the latter are coarse and the hair woolly, like those of negroes. She has a sash round her neck, the knot of which is prominent below the throat. This woman has stretched her hand in a significant manner, as if to receive certain information

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps the earlier form of the Indian *choli* or present-day fans of the Deccan.  
*aṅgiyā*. *Ajanta*, i. 17.

<sup>2</sup> The fan is of palm-leaves matted in the style of the

<sup>3</sup> *Ajanta*, i, Plates XIII, XVII, and XXVIII.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 3.



from the other maid, the gesture of whose fingers indicates that she is telling something to her companion. The latter, who is of a fair complexion, has a youthful face, but is rather plump. She holds a water vessel with a cup which has been inverted on the neck of the vessel. This maid is wearing a scarf round her head in a style which suggests that she is either a Parthian (*Pahlava*) or a Scythian (*Śaka*), for this kind of headgear has not been found in the representation of indigenous people either in Indian sculpture or painting. The scarfs or *orhnīs* shown in the early paintings of Cave X (Plate XXIV) are worn in a style different from that in the present case. The maid is wearing a long tunic with full sleeves. The pretty fringe of black hair shown over her forehead below the scarf exhibits fine brush-work and also the painter's love of detail.

On the roof of the pavilion is sitting a peafowl which has gorgeous feathers. The bird has lowered its neck in a significant manner, as if it is feeling the unhappiness of the events enacted below. The legends of the Buddha being born as bird and animal established a special bond between human beings and other forms of creation, and this union has often been shown in the frescoes of Ajanta.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Griffiths, who copied the fresco during the cold season, 1872-3, has paid a high tribute to its vividness. He writes: 'For pathos and sentiment and the unmistakable way of telling its story this picture, I consider, cannot be surpassed in the history of art. The Florentine could have put better drawing, and the Venetian better colour, but neither could have thrown greater expression into it.'<sup>2</sup>

## THE CONVERSION OF NANDA (?)

### *Plates LIII-LIV*

*The subject is painted in the left corridor, above the first and second cell-doors from the left. It is reproduced in colour.*

**F**OUR episodes of the story can easily be made out in the painting. The first represents the celebration of Nanda's consecration as heir apparent, and perhaps also his marriage, which took place at the time of the Buddha's visit to Kapilavastu after his enlightenment.<sup>3</sup> Starting from the top right end a Parthian, or Scythian, chief is seen, who is riding on a steel-grey horse. The features of the rider are indistinct, but his conical cap with a fur brim and long full-sleeved coat prove him unmistakably to be an inhabitant of one of the Asiatic countries to the north-west of India. The head and arched neck of the horse have been drawn with realistic effect. To indicate movement the artist has shown the back ends of the rider's scarf, as if flying in the air. The coat of the rider is of a striped material, but the design of

<sup>1</sup> A notable display of this union may be seen in the fresco of the Great Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi, wherein peafowls, monkeys, and a lion show joy at the Bodhisattva's decision to renounce the world. *Ajanta*, i, pp. 29-30 and Plate XXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Burgess, *Notes*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>3</sup> Nanda was the half-brother of the Buddha and son of Mahāpajāpati.



the triangular white collar is very typical, for it is often seen on the coats worn by such foreigners in other frescoes. By the side of the horse may be made out the head of a woman whose hair is bedecked with flowers. In front of her is another figure, probably of a groom, whose white cap of Persian design can be made out.

Proceeding towards the left, the town or palace gate may be noticed, close to which are represented the figures of a coolie, a groom, and a riderless horse. The animal has raised his head as if to neigh, which horses generally do when reaching the end of a stage and feeling relief. It is also possible that the painter by this pose intended to indicate the joy of the animal at its rider's getting the opportunity of being blessed by the Buddha, which is shown lower down in the fresco. The coolie is carrying baggage, which is slung with ropes to a bamboo (बहंगी). The groom, as shown by his dress, is a foreigner, a Parthian or Scythian. He is clad in a long greenish coat and has a white cap on his head. Beyond this scene there is another where the horse with the groom and the rider with two attendants of his own race may be seen. The figure of the rider can easily be identified by his white collar of triangular design and conical fur-brimmed cap. The scene perhaps lies in the forecourt of the royal palace wherein Nanda's consecration as heir apparent was being celebrated. The horse in this scene has been shown standing under an areca-nut(?) tree, the foliage of which, rich with autumn effects, has been shown with evident delight by the artist.

Near the tree is a pavilion wherein the figure of the Buddha is shown in two places. He holds a bowl in his left hand, and in one place, towards the left, he is blessing a woman and a child (Yasodharā and Rāhula?), whose figures have become very dim in the painting. In the other place, standing between the two pillars towards the right, he is blessing or initiating into the Doctrine the Parthian king and a lady who are squatting on the floor in front of him. The figure of the Master appears again to the right of the last scene, accompanied by an attendant and also by a child (Rāhula?), who, probably through joy, is running about him, for the figure of the child is represented both behind and in front of the Buddha.

In the apartment towards the right there are eight figures, five of them being male and three female. The latter are sitting on the floor and looking towards the Buddha, who is entering the apartment. The features of the male as well as of the female figures show them to be early inhabitants of the Deccan, having round faces, short noses, and woolly hair. The artist, apparently to bring their features into prominence, has placed high lights on the foreheads, noses, lips, and chins of these figures. Of the representations of women two are badly damaged, but the third at the extreme right end, near the pillar, is better preserved and shows art of a superior class. Apart from the devout expression, the modelling of the body and the fine brush-work of the hair exhibit perfect technical skill.

The story was apparently continued below this scene, but owing to the peeling away of the fresco, except for the figure of a rājā kneeling in front of the Buddha, hardly anything is left. The rājā is apparently Nanda, who has agreed to join the Order. A representation of Nanda kneeling before the Buddha, based on Major Gill's copy, is given in Mrs. Speir's book, *Life in Ancient India*. It is also included in Burgess's *Notes*, Plate XIV, 3. But Gill's copy does not appear to be accurate when compared with the photograph of the figure in this plate (LIII).



The next episode of the story is painted above the second and third cell-doors. Here the scene represents events relating to the ordaining of Nanda. He is first shown sitting on the floor in the forecourt of a monastery, where it is supposed a barber is shaving his head. The upper part of the body of the barber has disappeared owing to the falling down of the painted layer from the rock-wall, but the way in which Nanda's head is inclined in the fresco confirms the above surmise. Two monks are watching the operation, one of whom, rather youngish, has Āryan features. At the back of this scene, towards the right, is a pavilion with round wooden pillars. The parapet of triangular design, shown on the roof of this pavilion, may be of interest to students of Indian architecture.

Inside the pavilion a monk, with a shaven head, is sitting in a melancholy mood. He is probably the love-sick Nanda, feeling the pangs of separation from Belle-of-the-Country. There are several other monks inside the pavilion, and at the extreme right end, between two pillars, is the Buddha, watching the pathetic condition of Nanda.

The third episode of the story is shown on the left side of Plate LIV, near the top. Here the Buddha with another monk is seen flying in the air, apparently representing the flight of the Buddha with Nanda to the Heaven of the Suite of the Thirty-three. In the plate only the lower parts of the bodies of the Buddha and Nanda are seen, but in the original fresco their entire bodies may be observed. The figure of the Buddha appears again close to the flying figures towards the right. He is accompanied by a young monk. There are several other figures, but they have become so faint that it is difficult to say whether the scene represents the Heaven of the Suite of the Thirty-three, or the Buddha's return thence after standing guarantee for Nanda's obtaining celestial nymphs if he performed the duties of a monk (*supra*, p. 50, f.n.).<sup>1</sup>

The artistic merits of this fresco cannot be fully judged owing to its damaged condition, but such figures as remain intact show it to be the work of the same artist who drew the subject known as the Dying Princess. It is interesting to note that in this painting people of three different racial types have been represented. In the upper part of Plate LIII there are foreigners, Parthians (*Pahlavas*) or Scythians (*Śakas*), a little lower in the same plate the aborigines of the Deccan (Dravidians?), and still lower down in the same plate and in the next one (LIV) people of pure Āryan stock or of a race having a strong Āryan element.

In Plate LIII, near the bottom, is painted the scene reproduced in Mrs. Speir's book and also copied by Burgess in his *Notes* (Plate XIII. 2).<sup>2</sup>

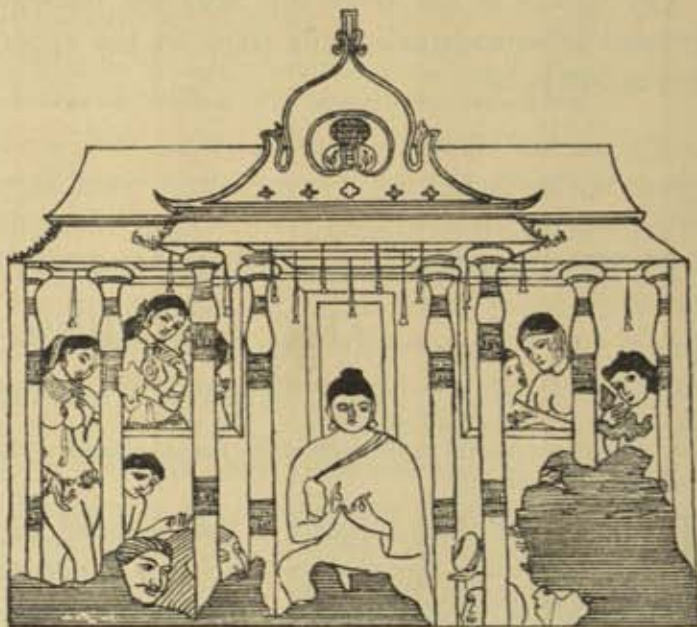
The fresco since the time of Major Gill, on whose copy all the reproductions are based, has suffered much, and the figure of the Buddha, who was shown preaching in the middle, has almost disappeared, except for a portion of the head. The figure of the lady standing near the pillar at the extreme left end of the painting can, however, be made out with certainty, and shows both grace of pose and decorative skill. The architectural features of the building

<sup>1</sup> In this scene besides the figures of the Buddha and the young monk (Nanda?) the figures of five ladies may also be traced in the original fresco, the latter perhaps representing the celestial nymphs.

<sup>2</sup> This is also reproduced in the *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, by Fergusson and Burgess, vol. i, Frontispiece (rev. ed.)



represented in the fresco are clear. At the back is a hall with a gabled roof, painted white in the original fresco. The hall has two windows and a door opening on to the veranda. The roof of the veranda, painted green in the original fresco, is slanting, and rests on wooden pillars. These have round shafts and narrow necks, and are crowned with bell-shaped capitals and square abaci. From the middle of the veranda projects a porch, the roof of which again rests on pillars and has a triangular frieze with an ornamental *chaitya*-window design in the middle. The drawing seems to be a faithful copy of a religious or secular building of the period, and the artist has taken considerable pains to reproduce even the minor detail, such as the decorative crenation in the sides of the roof at the joints. The drawing is also a good specimen of the artist's sense of perspective.



## MĀNUSHI BUDDHAS

### Plate LV<sub>a</sub>

*The figures are painted above the third cell-door from the left, and are reproduced in monochrome.*

FIGURES of four seated Buddhas in the teaching attitude are seen in the lower row, just above the cell-door, and of seven, or eight, more Buddhas in the same attitude in the upper row. The Buddhas of both the rows have cushions of check and other designs behind their backs, and besides the conventional haloes signifying lordship, the figures of the lower row have triple umbrellas over them. The drawing is of conventional type, showing neither imagination nor any special artistic skill, apparently being the work of a *bhikshu* prepossessed with stereotyped forms of the representation of the Great Being. There are two votive inscriptions, one each below the seat of the first and the second Buddhas and the third and fourth Buddhas in the lower row, and another inscription below the seat of the third Buddha from the left in the upper row. These inscriptions have been studied by Dr. N. P. Chakravarti in the Appendix (pp. 94 ff.). According to him they are of a later date than the fifth century A.D., the date of the Cave,<sup>1</sup> and the figures of the Buddhas may have been painted in the sixth century or even later, after the deterioration of the original frescoes on this part of the rock-wall. The figures of the Buddhas appear rather abruptly after the scene of the Con-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 87.



version of Nanda, and appear to be later work both from the general decorative scheme of the cave and from the technique of this painting.

The figures in the lower row bear the inscription *Bhadanta Dharmmadattasya*, 'of the reverend Dharmadatta', while those in the upper row have *Bhadanta Bapukasya*, 'of the reverend Bapuka'.<sup>1</sup>

## FLYING FIGURES (*APSARASES?*) AND THE BUDDHA IN THE TEACHING ATTITUDE

*Plates LV b-c and LVI a-b*

*These subjects are painted to the right of the fourth cell-door. The frescoes being in a damaged condition, they are reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE first of these subjects (LV *b*), painted above the figure of the Buddha towards the left, is a male figure, representing a *gandharva* or a *yaksha*, both of whom according to the Buddhist legend possess power to fly in the air.<sup>2</sup> The figure is drawn in black and white with considerable grace, particularly the fingers, which show both beauty of form and a sensitive nature. In the left hand the *gandharva* holds a tray which is made of a large leaf of the lotus or some other plant. In the tray flowers may be traced in the original fresco, which the *gandharva* has brought as an offering to the Buddha.

Above the figure of the Buddha on the right side is a pair, of which the female, the *apsaras*, is intact (LV *c*). Of the other figure, only the loin-cloth and a portion of one of the legs are visible, the rest of the drawing having completely perished. The figure of the *apsaras* is drawn in black and white and suggests movement. The modelling is good, and the decorative detail, such as that shown in the coiffure, is also pretty. The eyes, however, are much too large for the face.

The figure of the Buddha, which is drawn below the last two subjects, is shown seated on a chair of elaborate design. It has dragon-heads at the back, elephant-heads near the arms, and figures of lions with human heads near the legs (Plate LVI *a-b*). The lions show similarity to their prototypes in Assyria, which is not unusual, for winged monsters, bell-shaped capital, and crenated parapet, of Persian design, are frequently noticed in the early sculpture and architecture of the Deccan. The figure of the Buddha is much damaged, but his hands are intact, and they show that he is represented in the teaching attitude. The feet rest on a full-blown lotus-flower, the stalk of the plant being held by two *nāgas*, a king and a queen. There are two attendants, one on each side of the chair of the Buddha. One of these attendants is apparently male and the other female, as indicated by the *dhotī* (loin-cloth) of the figure on the left and the *ghaghri* (skirt) of the figure on the right. The heads of these two attendants are missing, but such parts as are intact show a stereotyped form of art.

<sup>1</sup> For further information see Appendix, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> The *gandharvas*, heavenly musicians, are often associated with *apsarases* as their consorts.



## THE BUDDHA IN THE TEACHING ATTITUDE

### *Plates LVIc and LVIIa*

*The scene is painted on the back wall of the cave to the left of the shrine, between the first and second cell-doors. As the fresco is much damaged, an outline of the drawing is reproduced in addition to its photograph in monochrome.*

THE fresco at first sight appears to be a dark patch on the rock-wall, but the eye on a close scrutiny can trace the drawing of many figures, which have survived the ravages of time and the depredations caused by bats and insects. In the middle of the painting is the figure of the Buddha, seated on a royal chair, similar in design to the one described in the account of the last fresco (*supra*, p. 56). His feet rest on a lotus, the stalk of which is held by two *nāgas* in a brisk buoyant attitude, expressing their religious fervour. There are two attendants, the one towards the left holding a rosary, and the other, towards the right, a *vajra*. The heads of these two figures are missing, but from the above symbols they can be identified with certainty. The one holding the rosary is the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, while the one holding the *vajra*, the double three-forked prong, is the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi.<sup>1</sup> On both sides of the principal figure of the Buddha there are standing figures, either representing the Buddha himself or the Bodhisattvas. As the upper parts of these figures are missing, it is impossible to identify them. In the background of the painting, to the left of the seated Buddha, there are some lovely lotus-flowers near the figure of the votary.

In the lower part of the fresco, on either side of the chair of the Buddha, there are groups of votaries representing two different classes. Those on the left are of a princely class. The male figure nearest to the throne in this group is wearing a jewelled crown. His head is inclined in an attitude of respect, which is also confirmed by the devout expression of his face. By the side of the latter was apparently his wife, who has joined her hands in the act of adoration. Behind this royal pair there are six more figures, among which one representing a lady is better preserved. Her elegant features and soft innocent looks show high artistic skill, and it appears that the fresco is of the same period as the subject entitled *The Dying Princess*. To the left of the figure of this lady another representing a guard can be made out. He holds a short curved sword in his hand. As the other figures of this group are damaged considerably, it is difficult to study their artistic detail.

On the other side of the Buddha's chair, the nearest figure to him represents a lady in a state of amazement, as indicated by the gesture of her hand. In this group, however, the most striking figures are those of hermits, drawn on the right side of the fresco. Among these, the one at the bottom is wearing a patched tunic and has a skull fixed to his head-gear. The gesture of his right hand shows that he is trying to grasp what the Buddha is saying. Behind the hermit is a woman holding a staff in her left hand and listening with rapt attention to the sermon of the Buddha. Above the last two figures is another representing a hermit with a bald head. He also holds a long staff in his hand. Behind the latter, on a higher level, is another hermit, who is dressed in a cloak of striped material. Figures of two more hermits can be made out in this group, but as their heads are missing, their expressions cannot be judged.

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, i, p. 35.



The scene may be identified with the preaching of the Buddha in the Tushita Heaven, in which case the congregation on the left side shows Indra (Sakka) and his retinue; while on the right the hermit with the skull in his head-gear may represent Śiva (?), or some Buddhist deity associated with such an emblem. But if the Elephant Procession, painted adjoining this subject towards the right, is to be associated with it, the entire scene would represent the visit of Ajātaśatru to the Buddha in the Mango Grove, which is reproduced at both Bharhut and Amaravati.<sup>1</sup> The group towards the left, according to the latter identification, would represent Ajātaśatru and his wives, who accompanied him when he waited on the Buddha to confess his sin and seek absolution.

## THE ELEPHANT PROCESSION: VISIT OF AJĀTAŚATRU (AJĀTASATTU) TO THE BUDDHA (?)

*Plates LVI d and LVII b*

*The subject is painted on the back of the inner corridor between the shrine and the second cell-door from the left. As the painting has deteriorated much, it is reproduced in monochrome and an outline of the drawing given separately (LVII b).*

THIS fresco had decayed to a worse condition than the previous one (LVII a). Recently, however, all such pieces of it as survived have been fixed to the rock-wall in a scientific manner with casein and other chemicals. There are eight or more figures of elephants arranged in the form of a procession including a number of footmen, who are armed with swords, or playing on musical instruments, such as flutes and trumpets. Notwithstanding the many gaps in the fresco, the figure of a flute-player can be made out with certainty on the right side a little above the bottom, both in the monochrome reproduction and in the outline. In the original fresco the heads of the other figures near the flute-player are also visible, although they are not very clear in the reproductions (LVI d and LVII b). They show activity, as of men marching briskly in front of a royal elephant whose head and trunk can be traced behind them. The head of one attendant, to the left of the flute-player, is shaved, except for a lock left just above the forehead. This, combined with his parrot-like nose, evokes laughter. Another of these attendants, who is of rather short stature, holds a blue curved sword in his right hand. Another attendant just behind the latter is armed with a shield of rectangular shape. The check pattern of the shield is conventional, apparently signifying scales of rhinoceros skin. This attendant is also armed with a sword. The blue colour, which has retained its original freshness in this fresco, in the case of sword-blades is again conventional, representing the blue shade of the steel. The handles of some of the swords resemble their prototypes of European manufacture. The heads of two elephants also can be traced among the figures near the bottom. On these two elephants, as well as on those drawn in the middle of the fresco, the figures of

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Buddha*, by Thomas, Plate IV, and *The Buddhist Stupas of Amaravati and Jaggayyapet*, by Burgess, Plate XXII. The story is given in some detail in the

*Dīgha Nikāya*, tr. by T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, vol. i, pp. 65-95.



women are prominent; they apparently represent the wives of Ajātaśatru. These ladies have been shown riding on elephants in the sculptures of Bharhut and Amaravati as well.<sup>1</sup> All the elephants are richly caparisoned, but the State elephant, drawn in the middle, has a gorgeous carpet on his back, and from its rich ornamental border hang tassels of silk, or of gold and silver thread. As the upper part of the back of this elephant is missing, the royal rider, Ajātaśatru, cannot be traced in the fresco, but the figure of Jīvaka (?), with long flowing hair and dressed in a cloak, may be seen behind the State elephant at the right end of the fresco. The design of the cloth of Jīvaka's cloak is worthy of notice, consisting of double-lined stripes, the spaces between which are filled with stars. The figures of the elephant-driver (*mahāwat*) and his mate (*charkaṭā*), showing their right positions on the body of the animals when proceeding in state, can be studied in this picture. The *charkaṭā* is seen behind the trunk of the State elephant, perched on the haunches of another animal whose up-turned tail is very significant in the drawing. The figure of a *mahāwat* is noticed on another animal, to the left of the State elephant but drawn on a lower level. The *mahāwat* is sitting on the neck of the animal, his legs almost encircling the head. Above the figure of the State elephant we see some attendants who are holding long staffs, and one of them is blowing a trumpet.

The rich trappings of the elephants show the pomp of the royal life of the period when the fresco was painted (fifth century A.D.), an idea of which is also obtained from contemporary literature such as the dramas of Kālidāsa. A special technical feature to be noticed in this fresco is the use of blue lines below the eyes to indicate shade.

<sup>1</sup> In the legend preserved in the *Dīgha Nikāya* there is a reference to elephants to be ridden by the wives of Ajātaśatru. For the information of the general reader a summary of the story as related in the *Dīgha Nikāya* is given here:

During his ramblings to preach the Doctrine the Buddha once arrived at Rājagṛha and stayed in the Mango Grove of Jīvaka, the royal physician to King Ajātaśatru. About this time, when the king was sitting on the terrace of his palace and enjoying the beauty of a moonlit night, he expressed a desire to listen to the sermon of some holy personage who could set his mind at peace, for it had been in a state of agony since his murder of his father. The ministers of the king suggested the names of several monks, for instance those of Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambali, and Pakudha

Kachchāyana. Ajātaśatru was, however, not satisfied by any of them, and asked Jīvaka, who had been silent, to give him the benefit of his knowledge in this matter. Jīvaka thereupon described the greatness of the Buddha, and begged the king to visit the Teacher. Ajātaśatru readily agreed, and proceeded in state to the Mango Grove. He himself rode on the State elephant and his wives on the she-elephants of the royal stable. Ajātaśatru on his arrival was deeply impressed by the calm of the assembly, and saluted the Buddha and the Order. Afterwards he asked a number of questions, and on getting his doubts cleared, he confessed his sin in murdering his father and sought refuge with the Master. The Buddha absolved him of the sin, and the king returned to his palace much relieved in mind. Translation by T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, vol. i, pp. 65-95.



## THE BUDDHA PREACHING TO THE CONGREGATION

### Plate LVIII

*The subject is painted in the back corridor to the right of the shrine above the third and fourth cell-doors from the left. It is reproduced in monochrome.*

AS the fresco is damaged, like the others in this corridor, the figures are not quite clear in the photographic reproduction (Plate LVIII). Still, the representations of *bhikshus* and several personages wearing crowns can be made out. In the original fresco twenty figures can be traced on the left side of the Buddha and six to his right. Further there are two attendants holding fly-whisks, one on each side of the Buddha's chair, and two votaries near his feet. Such parts of the figures as are intact show the skill of the artist in modelling, the use of high lights, and the indication of shade by washes of a deep colour. He has also succeeded in giving a devout expression to the members of the congregation, as if they were listening with much attention to the Master's sermon. The mysterious effect of the sermon on the mind of the votaries has also been exhibited by the gesture of their fingers; for example, the figure near the foot of the Buddha's chair, towards the left, has made a loop. As in this scene almost all the figures are either wearing crowns or are dressed as *bhikshus*, it has been suggested by some scholars that the drawing represents the Buddha's preaching in the Tushita Heaven, and the congregation comprises the *devas* of that heaven.<sup>1</sup>

The carving on the chair of the Buddha is more elaborate than on the chairs shown in Plates LVI *a-b* and LVII *a*, and a novel feature of the dragons' heads in the back of the chairs is that instead of tongues lolling out from their mouths, thin serpents are leaping forth. The figure of the Buddha is much damaged, but the right shoulder and arm show vigorous modelling. In this fresco, the figures being of considerable size, their artistic detail can be better appreciated.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Regarding this scene Monsieur A. Foucher's opinion may also be quoted: 'It is more likely that we have here as at Bharhut an illustration of the text of "the Great Assembly" (*Mahāsamaya-sūtra*) where all the supernatural beings met to pay homage to the Teacher.' *Jour. Hyd. Arch. Soc.*, 1919-20, pp. 88-9.

<sup>2</sup> To the left of this subject, between the shrine and the third cell-door, there is a procession-scene which is not reproduced in the plates because of its being in a very damaged condition. Such figures as can be made out are described here. Commencing from the left side, first there is a soldier holding a sword and a shield. The latter has the head of a monster carved on it. Next to the first

soldier there is another carrying a curvilinear shield of rectangular shape. A third soldier has a spear in his hand, and as the figure of the fourth is damaged in the fresco his weapon cannot be made out. The fifth soldier has a shield with a 'bogie' head. He is armed with a spear. The sixth warrior also holds a shield, and the seventh a flag. The last is of a dark brown complexion, but his head is missing. There are also some figures of women shown in the scene. Two of them are quite distinct; one is of a pinkish complexion and the other holds a round vessel. Above the figures of the soldiers there was the representation of an elephant whose trunk may still be traced.



# SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA : SUJĀTĀ OFFERING FOOD TO THE BUDDHA, THE OFFERING OF TRAPUSHA (TAPUSSA) AND BHALLIKA (BHALLUKA), THE VISIT OF THE KING OF MAGADHA, AND THE BUDDHA IN THE STREETS OF RĀJAGRIHA

## Plate LIX

*The scenes are painted on the wall of the right corridor in Cave XVI, above the third and fourth cell-doors from the right. They are reproduced in monochrome.*

THE entire wall of the right corridor is covered with representations of scenes from the life of the Buddha, commencing from the nativity and continuing to his visit to Rājagriha after his enlightenment. The fresco has much deteriorated owing to climatic conditions, and in a few places acts of vandalism, such as cutting off the heads of figures with a view to selling them to visitors, may also be traced. But in spite of these depredations, what remains on the rock-wall suffices to enable us to identify the various scenes of the life of the Teacher and to admire the skill of the artist in depicting them.

In this plate (LIX), commencing from the top of the left side, the scene of Sujātā offering food to the Buddha is first noticed. The Master is shown standing, and he holds a bowl in his hand. The figures of four hermits can also be traced around him. In front of the Buddha is a lady holding a round vessel in her hand, which is apparently the vase of water mentioned in the legend.<sup>1</sup> Behind this lady is another sitting near the fire-place, and

<sup>1</sup> Warren has narrated the legend, translating it from the Introduction to the *Jātaka* (i. 685). A summary of Warren's translation is given here.

There lived a girl in Uruvela, named Sujātā, who made a prayer to a certain banyan-tree that if she got a husband of equal rank with herself and her first child was a son, she would make a rich offering yearly to the tree. The prayer of Sujātā was granted; and to fulfil her vow she made preparation for the offering on the day of full moon of the month of Vesākha full six years after the Great Being commenced his austerities. She had pastured a thousand cows and from their milk nourished five hundred cows. From the milk of the latter she fed only two hundred and fifty, and so on down to feeding the milk of sixteen cows to eight only. This process was adopted by Sujātā to enrich the nutritive properties of the milk. On the day she wished to make the offering the milk flowed from the teats of the cows without their being sucked by the calves first, and Sujātā placed the milk in new vessels and herself lit the fire and began to cook the milk-rice. She noticed the four guardian angels helping her in preparing the dish, and by their superhuman power they col-

lected and poured into the milk-rice the vital sap sufficient for the sustenance of the gods and men of the four great continents. Having seen the above miracle, Sujātā told her slave-girl, Puṇṇā, that the tree-deity was very graciously disposed to them and that she should go quickly to the tree and make everything ready for the offering. Puṇṇā, when she came to the tree, noticed the Buddha under it, and as his radiance had lit up the tree, she thought that the deity had come out of the tree to receive the offering in person. She ran back to her mistress and informed her of what she had seen. Sujātā was overjoyed by the news, and she poured the rice-milk into a gold dish worth a hundred thousand pieces of money, and covered it with another which was also of gold and equally costly. Afterwards she proceeded to the tree, and at the sight of the Future Buddha was exceedingly delighted, for she considered him to be the tree-god. She bowed in a respectful manner, and with some flower-scented water in a golden vase, she drew near the Future Buddha and took up a position near him. The earthenware bowl which the Future Buddha had kept so long and which had been given him by Ghaṭikāra, the Mahā-Brahma God, at that



stirring the contents of a pot with a ladle. She is evidently Sujātā of the story cooking the milk-rice for an offering to the tree-deity. Her cows, whose number in the legend is reduced from one thousand to eight with a view to enriching their milk, are shown as four only in the fresco. They are to be noticed behind Sujātā. The four hermits, who are seen around the Buddha, may be the four guardian angels of the story, who mixed vital sap in the rice-milk to increase the nourishing quality of the dish. These hermits may also be identified with those monks who accompanied the Buddha during the six years of his austerities, and whom he had promised to initiate into the Doctrine after his enlightenment. As these figures have become somewhat faint, it is difficult to study their artistic features, but the identification of the story with the offering of Sujātā is clear enough and there remains no doubt about it.

To the right of the above scene there is another in which the Buddha is shown seated. There are two male figures, one on each side of his seat. The figure to the left holds a stick in his hand, while his companion towards the right has a halberd or a flag in his left hand and also a bundle on his back. The two figures apparently represent the merchants Trapusha and Bhallika of the legend, who offered honey and rice-cakes to the Buddha after his seven weeks' trance following the enlightenment.<sup>1</sup>

Below the last two scenes there are two more. The one on the left represents the Buddha again seated on a throne or a stone slab. In front of him are several figures, but as the fresco has much faded, only the figures of a bearded person, of another wearing a pearl necklace, and of a groom standing near the horse, can be made out with certainty. The head and neck of the horse are drawn with considerable artistic effect. The harness of the horse is the same as that of the horses in the *Mahājanaka* and *Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātakas* in Caves I-II.<sup>2</sup>

Above the figure of the horse, the head and trunk of an elephant may also be traced, the head being adorned with an ornamental band. As elephants were generally used by royal personages, it may be assumed that among the votaries who are listening to the preaching of the Buddha there is also a king. This feature, coupled with the representation of the Buddha with the begging-bowl passing through a street, in the adjoining scene towards the right, has led scholars to identify the first scene with the visit of Bimbisāra to the Buddha after his renunciation, and the latter with his going over to Rājagṛiha from Anupiya after he had stayed seven days at the latter place.<sup>3</sup> As the scenes tally with the accounts given in the Buddhist sacred texts, the identification seems to be correct.

instant disappeared, and the Future Buddha, stretching out his right hand in an attempt to find his bowl, grasped the vase of water. Afterwards Sujātā placed the dish of milk-rice before the Buddha and said, 'Lord accept my offering, and go whithersoever it seemeth to you good'. *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 71-4.

<sup>1</sup> The Buddha went into a seven weeks' trance after the enlightenment, at the end of which he stood in great need of food. At that time the caravan of two brothers, Trapusha and Bhallika (in Pali, Tapussa and Bhalluka), merchants of Orissa, coming near the grove where the Buddha was seated, they were warned by the deity of the

grove, and thus enabled to make offerings of honeycomb and wheat to the Great Being.

Thomas has given further details of the story, based on the *Jātaka*, *Vinaya*, and *Lalita* texts, in *The Life of Buddha* (pp. 85-6).

<sup>2</sup> *Ajanta*, i. 19 (f.n. 3) and ii. 40 (f.n. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas may be quoted regarding these events:

'The Jātaka tells us that Gotama, after staying seven days at Anupiya, went on foot straight to Rājagaha, the Magadha capital, in one day, a distance of some two hundred miles, and began to beg. The royal officers reported his arrival to the king (Bimbisāra), who in astonishment



In the street-scene where the Buddha is shown begging, the architecture of the shop is interesting. The first shop, to the left of the Buddha, has an eave of stone slabs, or of planks of wood, in the front for protection against sun and rain. The second shop, to the right of the former, has a flat ceiling with stone or wood rafters. As a roof of this design is noticed in the front corridor of this cave (*supra*, p. 5) it may be inferred that houses with flat roofs supported by wooden beams had come into fashion in the Deccan by the fifth century A.D., the date of this cave.<sup>1</sup> The left side of this shop has a grill-design which is to be noticed also at two places in the front corridor of Cave I (Plates IX and XXXVII).<sup>2</sup> The figure approaching the Buddha with an offering of food is broken, and only a part of it can now be traced.

The scenes show the fondness of the artist for depicting on the rock-wall all the principal events of the life of the Master, which were probably described orally also by the chief *bhikshus* in their sermons when they addressed the votaries.

## SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA : THE FIRST MEDITATION AND THE FOUR SIGNS

### Plate LX

*The scenes are painted on the wall of the left corridor in Cave XVI, between the third and fourth cell-doors from the right. They are reproduced in monochrome.*

THE first scene is painted in the middle, where a young hermit is seen sitting under a tree. He is the Future Buddha of the legend, who fell into a trance during the Ploughing Festival when his parents had taken him to the fields to watch the celebrations.<sup>3</sup> This event

seeing him from the palace ordered them to follow and observe. If he was a non-human being he would vanish, if a divinity he would go through the air, if a *nāga* into the ground, but if a man he would eat his alms. He was seen to go to the Paṇḍava hill, and, overcoming his disgust at the unusual food, to eat it. The king then came, and, pleased at his deportment, offered him entire sovereignty, but Gotama refused, saying that he had left the world with the desire for the highest enlightenment. Yet though he rejected the repeated requests of the king, he promised to visit his kingdom first on becoming Buddha, and then journeyed by stages to the teachers Ālāra and Uddaka. The *Therīgāthā* commentary, which is probably a later work, says that he first went to the hermitage of Bhaggava.

The *Jātaka* adds that the full account is to be found in the sutta of the Going-forth (*Pabbajjā-sutta*) with its commentary. Yet this sutta, found both in the Pali and in the *Mahāvastu*, differs curiously from the *Jātaka*. The king sees him first, and, noticing his beauty and down-cast eyes, sends messengers to find where he lives, then

visits him, offers him wealth, and asks of what family he is. Gotama tells him, but does not mention that he is a king's son, and says that he has no desire for pleasures, but seeing the evil of pleasures and looking on renunciation as peace, he is going to strive. Here the sutta ends, but the *Mahāvastu* adds two verses in a different metre containing Bimbisāra's request and Gotama's promise that he will return and preach the doctrine in his kingdom. This incident is also added by the Pali commentator on the sutta. *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix, p. 87.      <sup>2</sup> *Ajanta*, i, pp. 11 and 45.

<sup>3</sup> Warren has described the festival, and a summary of his account is here given.

The Sowing Festival was celebrated with great pomp. The whole city was bedecked, and the people put on new dresses and assembled at the king's palace, which by its decorations looked like an abode of gods. King Suddhodana in celebrating the festival took the young prince, Siddhattha, along with him to the fields. The king issued forth with a large retinue, and on that occasion there were



has been associated with the Future Buddha during his early age; according to one text, at a time before he could even walk, according to another, when he was old enough to walk about, according to a third, when he was quite grown up.<sup>1</sup> In the present painting (LX) the Future Buddha has been shown as a lad with a sprouting moustache, but he is surrounded by nurses who are offering him food. Behind him is the figure of a hermit, and below a pair of white oxen yoked to a plough, and also the figure of the driver, whose head is broken. The oxen appear to be of a good breed, and the pair and the plough may represent those used by Suddhodana on the occasion. There were some figures connected with the scene towards the right, but owing to the peeling of the fresco, except for the bust of one figure, these have completely disappeared.

To the left of the above scene is another representing a palace-room in which a rājā and his wife are seated on a throne and there are several attendants in front of them. The fresco is damaged at this place also, and the right half of the figure of the rājā and the upper half of the body of the rānī have completely perished. Among the attendants, a male figure with long wavy hair and a woman with an elaborate coiffure can be traced with certainty. The features of both of them are coarse, perhaps in contrast to the beautiful features of the rājā and the rānī, for the artists of Ajanta were always fond of emphasizing beauty by contrast. The scene represents Suddhodana and Māyā conferring together to devise plans which may dissuade their son from adopting the life of a monk. The fresco is much damaged, but when it is examined with the retinue painted below, the identification of the subject with the Future Buddha's drive and his seeing the Four Signs becomes certain.<sup>2</sup> The first three signs are represented in the

one hundred and eight ploughs, all but one having the trappings of the oxen and the cross-bars of the ploughs ornamented with silver. The royal plough was ornamented with red gold, as also the horns, the reins, and the goads for the oxen. In the field where the festival was to be celebrated there was a rose-apple tree (*jambu*) under which the king left his son and appointed nurses to watch him. Afterwards he proceeded with his attendants to plough. He himself drove the gold plough, his courtiers the silver ones, and the farmers the ordinary: they dug and harrowed the soil, moving forward and backward with great speed and magnificence until the function reached its climax. The nurses who were left by the king to look after the Future Buddha went away to enjoy the festival. The young prince looked around him, and finding himself alone, he sat cross-legged, and mastering his inspirations and his expirations entered on the first trance (First Meditation). The nurses delayed a little, being occupied in partaking of dainty articles of food, and when they returned they noticed that the shadows of the other trees had passed over towards the East while that of the rose-apple tree under which the Future Buddha was sitting had remained stationary, encircling him like a canopy. They also found him seated cross-legged.

They announced the miracle to the king, who hastened to the place and bowed before him, saying, 'This, dear child, is my second obeisance'. *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 53-5.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas has discussed the difference and referred to the *Majjhima*, the *Nidāna-kathā*, the *Mahāvastu*, the *Lalitā-vistara*, and the *Divyāvadāna*. *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 44-6.

<sup>2</sup> The story is given in various Buddhist texts, and may be summarized as follows: Since the eight Brahmins had prophesied on the name-giving day that the young prince, if he saw the four signs, i.e. an old man, a sick person, a corpse, and a monk, would renounce the world, his parents appointed guards to ward them off from the sight of their son. But when the prince was twenty-nine years old and the gods thought that the time of his leaving the world was at hand, the prince showed an inclination to go to the park and ordered his charioteer to get ready the vehicle for his drive. The latter readily obeyed the command of his master and brought the chariot, to which four white horses of Sindhava breed had been harnessed. The prince drove therein towards the park and saw on the way a decrepit old man, broken-toothed, grey-haired, crooked and bent of body, leaning on a staff and trembling through



frieze carved on the façade of Cave I, and one may be tempted to surmise that the scene here relates to his seeing the fourth sign. But as some Buddhist texts state that the Future Buddha saw all the Four Signs on one and the same day,<sup>1</sup> such a conjecture cannot be justified until the figure of a monk, the fourth sign, be traced in the fresco. The figure of a monk is, however, not visible, although the chariot to which 'four state-horses of the Sindhava breed' are harnessed and a large number of attendants, armed with shields and swords, are clear in the painting. The swords are short and curved like the *kukṛīs* of Gurkhas, as noticed in other frescoes also,<sup>2</sup> and the faces of the shields have conventional check patterns. There are some banners and also a fly-whisk attached to a long pole, all these emblems suggesting a royal cortège.

## A PALACE SCENE: THE CONCEPTION (?)

### *Plates LXI-LXII*

*The subject is painted in the right corridor above the first and second cell-doors from the right. It is reproduced in monochrome.*

THIS scene was identified by Burgess and his colleague Bhau Daji as the bedroom of the Future Buddha's wife wherein he appeared to have a last look at her and his newly born son Rāhula before his renunciation. But there is no figure of the Buddha in this scene nor in the next one, painted towards the left, in which a rājā and a rānī are seen talking together. Foucher has identified the former scene with that of the Conception, in which Māyā saw in a dream a white elephant entering her body from the left side, and the second scene with that of her relating the dream to King Suddhodana in the royal chamber. The absence of the figure of the Buddha makes Foucher's identification more likely, although the fresco representing the first scene is so much damaged that nothing except the lower part of the leg of a lady reclining on a couch is discernible.<sup>3</sup> A round pillow with a striped cover, on which the foot of the lady rests, is, however, prominent. The figures of two maids, who have apparently fallen asleep by the sides of the couch, are also visible. One of them has her face towards the bed; the other, whose face is towards the front, has beautiful features, and the artist's imagination can be admired in giving her a very realistic pose. Her head is inclined on one side and rests on

weakness. The sight startled the prince, and he inquired of his charioteer who that man was. On hearing the charioteer's answer the prince was much agitated in heart and said, 'Woe to birth, since to every one that is born old age must come'. He returned to his palace; and when his father was informed of the incident he rebuked his servants and extended the guard against the appearance of other signs to the Future Buddha. But after some time when he went to the park he saw another sign, a sick

person; and so it continued until the gods had shown the Future Buddha all the Four Signs in spite of all the precautions taken by Suddhodana. The prince on seeing the wretchedness of life through these signs decided to abandon the world with a view to seeking everlasting peace and happiness. Warren, 56-8, and Thomas, 50-4.

<sup>1</sup> *Dīgha-Nikāya*, General Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> *Ajanta*, i. 19, f.n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Hyd. Arch. Soc.*, 1919-20, pp. 81-2.



her arm and elbow, the latter being placed on the couch. To show the features of this lady to advantage the artist has placed high lights on her forehead, nose, lips, and chin. The body of another maid can also be traced near the candlestick, by the side of the bed in the foreground.

Near the foot of the couch, to the left of the maid, who is shown sleeping, there is a dodecagonal vessel with a grating in each side. It may be a brazier. On the same side, above the head of the maid, a circular table may also be seen. On it several small boxes, apparently containing articles of toilet, are placed. The table has a hole cut in its side to hold the neck of a flask, for the lower part of it is seen below the table. Above, two musical instruments are hung on the wall, one of the form of a fish, and the other either an *ek-tārā* or *do-tārā*, as reproduced here.<sup>1</sup>



The bedroom is connected by a door with a circular pavilion. The door has been clumsily drawn, but the drawing of the circular pavilion is perfect, and it shows that the artists possessed the sense of perspective and could draw correctly whenever they wanted to do that, and were not prepossessed by the conventions of the time. In the pavilion itself a *rājā* and a *rānī* are seen occupied in a serious talk. The scene, as identified above, represents *Māyā* relating the dream to *Suddhodana*. The figures of the *rājā* and the *rānī* have become very dim, but the artist's skill can be fully judged from the eight figures which are painted around the royal chamber. Some of them are seated and some standing, but all are listening with close attention to the conversation of *Māyā* with *Suddhodana* and looking at the royal pair in a very vivid manner. For example, the upturned faces of the two maids depicted near the door towards the right and near the door on the left show much eagerness by the expression of their eyes. The features and the pose of the latter maid can be better studied in the enlargement reproduced in Plate LXII. She has large eyes and a sharp nose, the latter being perhaps too big for her pretty face, yet the features taken collectively look quite attractive. The pose is, however, very graceful and impressive, the right arm showing much elasticity, the fingers of the left hand a sensitive nature. In contrast to the features of this maid are those of a maid of dwarfish stature, sitting to the right of the former. Her head, which is drawn in profile and illumined by high lights, shows her to be an aboriginal with a dark complexion, thick lips, and short nose, the nostrils being wide and prominent. But the curves shown in the outlines of the back and the deep colour washes indicating volume make this figure also an interesting specimen of the art of Ajanta in the fifth century A.D. (LXII).

The versatility of the artist in adopting a variety of poses to indicate the grace of figure of the Indian woman may be judged from the other maids represented in this scene, notably the one standing near a pillar, close to the door on the left (LXII). She has an oval face, but the features are very pleasing and the pose has enhanced the elegance of her figure. She is wearing a *sārī* of almost transparent material, and her bodice is also of a similar material, but

<sup>1</sup> Above the roof of the bedroom was painted another scene in which the figure of a hermit (the Future Buddha?), sitting on a chair with his feet resting on a stool, can still be made out with certainty. There are some more figures,

but the colours have become so faint that it is difficult to trace the detail of the drawing or the expression with any precision.



the wealth of jewellery round the waist has compensated for the scantiness of the apparel. The expression of her face indicates a calm, serene nature, which is the salient feature of Buddhist art, even when the vagaries of the artist's mind have taken delight in painting semi-nude subjects.

The door on the left leads to another apartment of the palace, where some other scene of the Buddha's life is represented. The figure of the Buddha as a prince may be identified by his crown and the portion of the head which is intact. He is conversing with a lady who may be his wife Yasodharā, and the subject may represent Prince Siddhārtha (in Pali, Siddhattha) broaching the idea of renunciation to her. The head of the lady is damaged, but the expression of her eyes unmistakably indicates pathos. There are four maids behind the lady, three more in front of the royal pair, and two behind the prince, one of whom is standing close to the door. In the doorway itself the figure of a guard may be seen. The drawing of the heads of the maids exhibits both artistic skill and play of fancy, but the general expression of the entire group, including the guard, is of amazement combined with anxiety. The guard has turned his right hand and fingers in a characteristic manner to show surprise. The colours of the fresco have faded much, but the detail of the drawing and fine brush-work can be studied in the beautiful coiffure of the ladies.

The architecture of the building shown in this scene is also interesting. There is a small porch in which the young prince (Siddhārtha ?) and his wife are seated. Behind the porch is a veranda, the ceiling of which is probably flat, as indicated by its wooden beams, but the veranda has a sloping cornice (*chhajjā*) in front of it, which at the first glance gives the idea that the roof of the veranda is sloping. From the latter apartment a narrow rectangular door leads to the hall, the roof of which is gable-shaped and crowned by finials.<sup>1</sup>

Behind the door to the left of the circular pavilion is a banana tree, and above that another scene in which a building with two doorways is represented. Bats have caused great havoc and destroyed the major portion of this subject. Only four figures can be traced now outside the door on the left, and three in the space between the two doors. Of the latter three figures, two have long hair spread on their backs.

Above the second cell-door towards the left is a garden scene wherein the sharp eyes of an artist may discern the figure of a woman (Māyā ?) holding the branch of a tree. Farther to the left the infant Gautama is seen in the arms of gods, who are four in number. Proceeding in the same direction, an infant is noticed walking on lotuses, as if taking the seven steps mentioned in the legend.<sup>2</sup> The scene is continued towards the left, and a lady (Māyā ?) is noticed leading a child (Gautama ?). Two maids accompany her, and there is also a male servant who has joined his hands together in an attitude of adoration.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This scene being very dim is not reproduced in the plates.

<sup>2</sup> The incidents relating to the birth of the Buddha are also painted on the left wall of Cave II. A short description of these incidents, based on Buddhist religious

texts, is given in *Ajanta*, ii, pp. 16-17, f.n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> As the colours of this subject have become very flat, and the drawing is also extremely dim, it has not been considered necessary to photograph it.



# SCENES FROM THE EARLY LIFE OF THE BUDDHA : THE VISIT OF THE SAGE ASITA, THE YOUNG PRINCE AT SCHOOL, AND THE PRACTICE OF ARCHERY

## Plate LXIII

*The scenes are painted between the first and second cell-doors in the right corridor of Cave XVI. They are reproduced in monochrome.*

**B**EGINNING at the left side, the first scene represents the visit of the sage Asita (Kāla-devala) who is shown holding the baby in his lap.<sup>1</sup> Asita's figure is intact, and his long beard and Āryan features can be studied in detail. The sage is looking intently at the baby as if to discern the marks of his future greatness, while several figures surround him, including the king, the queen, and a maid. The latter three figures have more or less perished; the king can be traced by his crown, the queen by her beautiful feet, and the maid by her rich coiffure and ribbons. The maid's head and back may be noticed below the stool or chair on which the sage is sitting.

The next scene, representing the young prince holding a wooden tablet, with a pen and inkstand placed in front of him, and three other boys engaged in similar pursuits, and a teacher with a hairless forehead sitting close to the Future Buddha, may remind one of the story of his going to school and outwitting Viśvāmitra by his knowledge of sixty-four kinds of alphabets.<sup>2</sup> The young prince is wearing a conical cap of Persian design with a ribbon tied round it in the style of the modern European felt hats. His coat also is of Persian style, having long sleeves with embroidery on the cuffs and round the arms, and a V-shaped collar.

<sup>1</sup> The story as given in the Buddhist religious texts is as follows:

On the day the Future Buddha was born, a sage, called Asita (Kāla-devala), beheld the gods of the Heaven of Thirty-three rejoicing in an unusual manner, and when Asita inquired of them the cause of their jubilation they told him that a son had been born to Siddhodana who would obtain enlightenment and cause the Wheel of the Doctrine to roll. On hearing this news Asita went to the palace of Siddhodana and requested the king to show him the child. Siddhodana readily agreed and brought the child into the presence of the sage. Asita could look backward into the past for forty world-cycles and similarly forward into the future for forty cycles, and as he noticed on the person of the baby the thirty-two marks of a great man and eighty minor marks, he exclaimed rather involuntarily, 'What a marvellous personage he is!' and smiled. Afterwards he wondered whether he would live to see the young prince attain enlightenment and learn from him the Doctrine, and realizing that he would not have that privilege, he felt grieved and

wept. Siddhodana grew anxious at the behaviour of the sage, and, fearing that some misfortune might befall his child, he inquired of Asita the cause of his first smiling and afterwards weeping. The sage explained to the king that he felt happy on noticing the auspicious marks on the body of the child and accordingly smiled, but when he reflected that he would not live to get enlightenment from the Future Buddha he felt disappointed and wept. *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 56-8, and *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 38-41.

<sup>2</sup> Among the very late additions to the story in the *Lalitā-vistara* is the visit of the Bodhisattva to the writing-school. He is taken there in great pomp, and the writing-master Viśvāmitra falls on the ground before his glory. The boy takes the writing-tablet, asks which alphabet his master is going to teach him, and gives a list of sixty-four kinds, including those of the Chinese and the Huns. When the boys repeat the alphabet, at each letter a moral truth is uttered, which begins with or contains that letter, and this takes place through the wonderful power of the Bodhisattva. *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 46-7.



His long hair is scattered on his shoulders. The dangling locks of the boy sitting in front of Prince Siddhārtha are also interesting. Above the figures of the boys two cages may also be noticed, in one of which is a parrot. There is also a stringed musical instrument like a harp hung along the wall.

The roof of the pavilion in which the prince and other boys are sitting is flat, and its rafters and cross-beams are clear in the fresco. Above the roof a dovecot may be seen, the openings of which have lattice-work of a square pattern. Two birds seem to be cooing, another has fluffed itself as if to roost, and another has bent its neck to pick up grain.

Below the school scene is an open court indicated by a banana tree. The court is entered by a door. Four boys are seen; one of them has bent one leg and stretched the other; this attitude combined with the position of his arms suggests that he is drawing a bow, but owing to the damaged condition of the fresco the bow cannot be traced (LXIII).<sup>1</sup> Two boys are sitting on low stools, and the third is standing under the banana tree and watching from there the skill of the Future Buddha.

There was another scene to the left of the above subject, and the dim outline of two or three figures may be traced, but the colours have completely faded and a large portion of the fresco has peeled off, thus making identification an impossible task. The design of the lotus-creeper on the right side of the plate shows the artist's delight in demonstrating his skill in the various kinds of decorative work, the elaborate diadems of the princes, the rich coiffure and jewellery of women, the frills of their *sārīs*, and the delicate stalks and petals of flowers. This design is to be noticed in Cave I also, and it appears to be a favourite theme for border decoration.

To the right of the first cell-door, around which the lotus-creeper design is painted, there is a subject in which four horses are seen. One of them is startled, and has raised its head high in the air; another is kneeling down. There are four grooms also whose gestures show that they are trying to calm the horses. Lower down in the fresco the figures of two elephants may also be seen. A man of short stature is watching the elephants. As the drawing of this subject is very dim, it has not been reproduced in the plates.

The walls of the right wing of the front corridor have suffered greater damage than any other part of this cave by the evil doings of its denizens, whether bats, or insects, or hermits who kindled fires for various purposes and have tarnished or burnt the colours. Until quite recently the surface of the few fragments which were sticking to the rock-wall looked jet black. These fragments have now been fixed firmly to the rock-wall by casein and other adhesives and their surface cleaned by ammonia. By this treatment the outline of the drawing in certain cases has become visible. For instance, in the fragment sticking to the right wall, left of the cell-door, the fat figure of Pañchika can be made out with certainty. He holds a pomegranate(?) in his right hand, the fruit being the symbol of fecundity. In the left hand he holds a purse from which coins are issuing forth. Notwithstanding the stout limbs of this *yaksha*, his hands are drawn with great skill, and the love of the artist for pretty detail may also be observed from

<sup>1</sup> There are stories in Buddhist scriptures of the Future Buddha's demonstrating his skill in archery, because the Sākyas doubted what a prince who had spent his life in ease and pleasure would be able to do if a war broke out. *The Life of Buddha*, p. 48; *Buddhism in Translations*, 55-6.



the pearl-jewellery on the body of the *yaksha*. In front of Pañchika is a figure with a greenish complexion whose hand has been drawn with care. This figure is wearing a coat the material of which has a check-pattern. The waistband of Pañchika also has a check-pattern, the small, dark squares being prominent. Lower down in the fresco is a third figure with a fair complexion; he holds a tray of lotus flowers, that being apparently an offering to Pañchika.

The fragment near the small door on the right side has also been cleaned, and now the drawing of several figures can be made out. Beginning at the left, the lower part of a pinkish figure is noticed first. Near by is the figure of a *bhikshu*, in a comparatively better state of preservation. The *bhikshu* has long hair which is hanging dishevelled on his shoulders. To the right of the latter there was another figure, on the torso of which an inscription may be noticed.<sup>1</sup> Close by is the figure of a second *bhikshu* who is squatting on the ground, and has placed his left hand on the earth for support. Farther on the right is the representation of a Brahman closely resembling in appearance his prototype in the *Viśvantara Jātaka* painted on the left wall of Cave XVII.<sup>2</sup> There is also a banana tree in the scene.

Lower down in the fresco, again commencing from the left, the heads of four figures are seen, and on a higher level than the latter another bearing a crown with a square front. A crown of this design has been shown on the head of Indra in several other caves at Ajanta. The story is continued on the wall, and there is another episode represented between two doors, one at each end of the scene. There are towards the left two *rājās*, or gods, wearing crowns, and towards the right another prince wearing a crown and accompanied by an attendant. In the middle five more figures can be made out. In the doorway towards the right there is a bare-headed figure facing a pavilion in which two ladies and two male figures are seen. Above the pavilion is the figure of a chief or a *yaksha* riding on a bay horse.

In this fragment on a higher level two banana trees may also be noticed, and between them two male figures, one of whom is dressed in a robe.<sup>3</sup>

## A RĀJĀ DISTRIBUTING ALMS: NOT IDENTIFIED

### Plates LXIV-LXV

*The subject is painted in Cave XVII on the back wall of the veranda near its left end, above the small door. As the colours of the fresco have faded it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

**A**LMSGIVING being the first of the Ten Perfections of the Buddhist faith, the quality of charity is emphasized in a large number of stories connected with the previous lives of the Buddha, as a human being, as an animal, or even as a reptile. The story represented in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 95 f.

<sup>2</sup> Herringham, Pl. XXIII. The subject painted here also represents the same *Jātaka*. The fresco is much damaged, but the inscriptions painted on three figures support the identification. Appendix, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> The ceiling of Cave XVI is painted like those of Caves I, II, and XVII. The ceiling of the hall has been

divided into a large number of panels with circular designs. The frescoes of the ceiling of the right corridor are comparatively better preserved, the patterns comprising geometric figures, floral motifs, and jewellery designs. A special feature of the technique is that the painter has given a white or black outline in order to show the colour patterns in relief.



this fresco shows a large crowd of ascetics and mendicants to whom food and other gifts are being offered, the latter including a necklace of jewels and two horses. These two presents may tempt one to identify the story with some episodes of the *Viśvantara (Vessantara) Jātaka*, in which the young prince Viśvantara, when he was four or five years old, gave away to his nurses a costly necklace which King Sanjaya, his father, had had made for him at a cost of a hundred thousand pieces of money.<sup>1</sup> Viśvantara also gave the horses of his chariot to four Brahmans, who had been unable to be present at the gift of the Seven Hundreds, and who followed him when they heard that King Sanjaya had banished him from his realm on account of the prince having given to some Brahmans a miraculous white elephant which could cause rainfall at the time of a drought.<sup>2</sup> The riderless horses and the necklace are clear in the fresco, and among the persons desirous of receiving the latter gift are a one-eyed monk, a Parthian or Scythian soldier, and a woman with a young child on her waist. Griffiths has reproduced a reconstruction of the figure of this lady in order to show the manner in which women carry their children in India.<sup>3</sup>

To begin with the description of the scene: On the left side of the fresco there is a king sitting with his wife on a throne, placed near an areca-nut tree. A young girl and a child are bringing trays of offerings to the royal pair. The hair of the girl and of the child is beautifully bedecked with flowers and ribbons. The features of the girl are like those of the aborigines of the Deccan at the present day. The drawing of the head of the queen has been damaged, but such parts as are intact show her to be beautiful, the features being fine. The features of the king on the contrary are coarse, and he has raised his right hand in the *abhaya mudrā*, as if he were assuring the Brahman who stands in front of him that his various demands will be fulfilled. The attitude of the latter shows him to be both covetous and impatient, for he is holding the tips of the fingers of his left hand with those of his right, thus indicating that he is enumerating his demands. To show his greedy look, the painter has placed high lights on his face.

Behind the Brahman there are two guards, one of whom is wearing a long coat while the other holds a whip. There was another guard who held a long staff in his hand, but his figure has perished owing to the decay of the fresco. The upper part of the staff can, however, be seen clearly. The torso of a *chaurī*-bearer can also be traced, between the throne and the covetous Brahman. The guards are controlling the entry of the ascetics, who seem to be eager to present themselves before the king. To the right of the guard holding the whip is an ascetic who has stretched his hand forward, probably to indicate that he wants to beg something from the king. His features are regular, but the general expression of the face betrays a cunning heart. Behind the ascetic there are two more, accompanied by two children with long unkempt hair. The latter two ascetics have long, demure faces, and they resemble, in regard to both their

<sup>1</sup> The *Jātaka* further states that when the king was informed of the gift he had another necklace made for Viśvantara. The prince, although a child, gave away the latter necklace also to his nurses, and repeated the gift nine times over, for Sanjaya continued to have the neck-

laces made for his son to develop his generous mind. *Jātaka*, vi, 251.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 252 and 265.

<sup>3</sup> *Paintings of Ajanta*, i, 34, fig. 71.



attire and general looks, the *sādhus* of the present day. The children have some importance attached to them, for both of them have umbrellas over their heads, these being emblems of sovereignty. Will it be stretching the imagination too much to identify the children with Jāli and Kaṇhājīnā, the son and daughter respectively of Viśvantara, whom he had given away as an act of charity to the avaricious Brahman Jūjaka? The Brahman, although planning to get a handsome reward from King Sanjaya, the grandfather of the children, by restoring them to him, maltreated the children on the way, tying them up with osiers and leaving them on the ground every evening while he himself rested on the top of a tree from fear of wild animals. The *Jātaka* adds that gods watched over the children and offered them food and comfort befitting their dignity.<sup>1</sup> The two demure *sādhus* who accompany the children may be gods in disguise, while the shrewd Brahman, to the right of the guard with the whip, may be Jūjaka. Behind the ascetic conducting the younger child there is another ascetic who is holding an umbrella over the child. Both the umbrellas are square in shape, apparently made of wood and covered with leaves of trees or with matting.

To the right of the last scene are the two riderless horses with two men between, and farther to the right two more male figures, representing wayfarers, to whom a royal servant is offering food or drink from a round vessel. Below the two wayfarers there is the head of a boy or a dwarf, but farther down nothing can be traced, for the fresco at that place has completely perished. The two male figures between the horses and the two wayfarers, taken together, may be the four Brahmans to whom Viśvantara made the gift of the horses of his chariot.<sup>2</sup>

Higher up is a servant taking a jewel-necklace out of a box. It has been mentioned above that three persons are eager to obtain the gift, a one-eyed *sādhu*, who has pushed close to the servant holding the necklace, a Parthian soldier, and a young lady with a baby on her waist. The young lady has raised her forefinger as a warning that none deserves the gift better than herself. The elaborate *jaṭā* and the vivid features of the *sādhu* exhibit a highly developed art. The head of the Parthian has been damaged in the picture, thus the expression of his face cannot be studied, but the eyes of the young lady indicate considerable eagerness to possess the ornament. She is wearing a half-sleeved jacket of a material with floral design. The Parthian wears a conical cap, which is divided by longitudinal ribs into four facets.

In the middle of the picture at the top there is a canopy, below which five monks are sitting. They are apparently the holy men of the place who command the respect of the king. They are seated on square stools with circular lathe-turned feet. The canopy appears to be of cloth, and like the *shāmiyāna* of modern times it is set up on bamboo-poles, the knots of which are visible. The triangular design of the fringe of the *shāmiyāna* is also interesting, for such fringes are in use even to-day. Two ladies are serving meals to the holy personages and a servant is bringing water in metal or earthen pitchers, which are hung by means of slings from the ends of a curved stick held on his back and shoulder. Another servant is distributing food to four more ascetics, one of whom is blind. Such an assemblage of *sādhus* and mendicants on ceremonial occasions is a common sight in Indian cities even now. The servant who is distributing food is dressed in a striped *dhotī*. At the right end of the scene, near the door,

<sup>1</sup> *Jātaka*, vi, 270-300.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 71.



is an amazon holding a sword in her right hand and a long curvilinear shield in her left. She has a strip of cloth as breast-band, otherwise the upper part of her body is nude. At the extreme right end of the picture is a doorway in which a guard, who holds a long stick, is standing.<sup>1</sup>

## A PALACE SCENE: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

### *Plate LXVI*

*The scene is painted in Cave XVII, on the back wall of the veranda, above the window. It is reproduced in colour.*

THE story seems to be a continuation of the previous one represented in Pls. LXIV-LXV, for the figure of the guard painted above that holding the whip in the last two plates occurs twice in this plate (LXVI). On the basis of this connexion the scenes depicted in the present fresco may be identified with certain episodes of the *Viśvantara Jātaka*, for example the pathetic incident when the prince in an atmosphere of conjugal bliss discloses to his fair wife the news of his banishment from the kingdom of his father, and enjoins her to retain all the precious gifts which he has made her, and find another husband for herself, and 'not pine alone'.<sup>2</sup> This scene without any stretch of the imagination can be made out in the right portion of the fresco, where a swarthy king is holding his fair consort in close embrace. The expression of the faces of both shows anxiety, and the prince is offering wine to his wife, apparently to soothe her feelings. She has languidly placed one of her arms for support on the body of the prince and stretched her left leg on the couch on which they are sitting. The pose of the princess is extremely graceful, exhibiting both imagination and skilful drawing. Like Cave XVI, this cave also has an inscription of the Vākāṭaka king Harisheṇa, carved on the outer wall near the left end of the veranda, and as the reign of this king has been fixed by experts in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D.,<sup>3</sup> the majority of the frescoes in this cave are almost coeval with those in Caves I and XVI. In the work of this period Parthian or Scythian servants are frequently represented attending on kings, and in the present subject also a Parthian maid wearing a conical cap, with a tuft at the top, and a green jacket may be noticed. She holds a flagon in her hands, and her pose indicates that she is ready to pour the drink into her master's cup. There is a pink-skinned dwarf at the foot of the couch looking up submissively at the prince and the princess. He holds a wide-mouthed vessel, apparently containing dessert. Another vessel of this shape is to be seen below the couch, in front of the prince. Near the head of the couch a dark-skinned maid is squatting on the floor. She also holds a vessel in her hands. It is round in shape, but has a conical lid.

To the right of the pavilion in which the prince and princess are seated there is a small open

<sup>1</sup> Below this scene to the left of the small door, in the middle of the wall, is an inscription painted in red. It consists of two lines. According to Dr. Chakravarti the writing is of the 5-6th century A.D. Appendix, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Jātaka*, vi, 256-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Cave-Temple Inscriptions*, p. 73 seq.; *Buddhist Cave Temples and their Inscriptions*, A.S.W.I., vol. iv, pp. 128 ff., and Appendix, p. 87.



court, in which the green foliage of an areca-nut tree, a banana tree, and some other tropical plants, besides adding an air of coolness to the environment, contrasts well with the orange and pink of the walls and pillars of the building. The lower part of the fresco has perished at this place, but the heads of four figures can be made out, three of them being female and the fourth male. The latter is the royal guard, noticed in the previous subject (Plates LXIV and LXV) near the whip-holder. Of the three ladies the one who is the tallest is also prominent by her fair complexion. She may be Phusatī, the mother of Viśvantara, who was smitten with grief on hearing of the command of banishment and approached the chamber of her son in order to overhear the conversation between him and his wife Mādrī (in Pali, Maddī).<sup>1</sup>

The left half of the fresco represents the court of the palace, with trees in front and at the back and the main door of the palace at one end. Here, quite close to the pavilion, the princess (Mādrī?) is seen proceeding towards the gate. She is attended by two maids and a guard, who is the same as noticed in the small court on the right of the palace. One of the maids is holding an umbrella over the head of the princess, and the other looking woefully at her face. The princess herself appears to be distressed, and the face of the guard also expresses deep sorrow. A beggar is seen in front; he holds a crooked staff and a large bowl in his left hand, while with the right he is making a gesture apparently to importune his confrères, who are all gods in disguise, to wait until his test of the generous nature of the princess is over. The features of the beggar and his crooked staff are so characteristic that he might be taken for a mendicant such as is to be seen in Benares and Gaya even to-day.

Near the gate is the rājā (Viśvantara?), a dark, stalwart figure attended by four maids, one of whom, with a pinkish complexion, holds an umbrella over the head of her master. To the European the shape of the umbrella may appear to be Chinese, but in some parts of India umbrellas of this type, which are made of thin sticks and leaves of trees, are still used. The colours of the eyes and the lips of this maid have faded, but those of the figure of her companion, standing to the left proper of the rājā, are intact, and the expression of her face can be judged better; she is looking with considerable amazement towards the rājā.

The figures of the two ladies in front of the rājā are much mutilated; the heads and the feet have completely perished. But such parts as are intact show most graceful poses, the charm of which is further enhanced by close-fitting drapery. The artist has cleverly adjusted trails and frills of exquisite design to balance the scantiness of the raiment. The drawing, although very firm, undulates from plane to plane to exhibit the beauty of bodily form pulsating with life.

A guard holding a long staff stands outside the doorway and is looking towards the interior of the palace, as if watching the exit of the prince and princess.

<sup>1</sup> *Jātaka*, vi, 258-9.



## INDRA AND APSARASES

### Plates LXVII-LXVIII

*The subject is painted on the back wall of the veranda to the left of the door, in Cave XVII. It is reproduced in two colour plates, one representing the entire scene and the other the two cymbal players of Indra's troupe on an enlarged scale.*

INDRA (Sakka) and his troupe of musicians are mentioned frequently in Buddhist legend, and in the present scene he is shown flying in the midst of clouds, as if to greet the Buddha at the time of his visit to the Tushita heaven after his Enlightenment. The lower part of the fresco has almost perished, but the upper part is well preserved, and the colours are so fresh that one is struck with wonder that they should have withstood the sun and moist air, to which they have been continuously exposed for fifteen centuries.

The figure of Indra<sup>1</sup> can be easily recognized by his fair complexion, noble features, magnificent crown, and rich jewellery. The strings of pearls worn across his shoulder and breast are swung backwards in order to suggest movement, which is further indicated by the bent knees. There are clusters of white and blue clouds in the background to show that the god is flying in heaven. The delineation of the clouds, in the form of white patches with blue rims of varying thickness, although conventional to a degree, fulfils the object of the artist admirably. Attached to his belt Indra has a dagger and a sword, which were perhaps features of the accoutrement of a king at that time (fifth century A.D.). In his left hand he holds a flower, a convention which was observed even by the painters of the Mughal kings of India down to the eighteenth century A.D.

To the left of Indra is a *gandharva* with coarse features, among which his shapeless blobby nose and small sunken eyes are especially comical. He is carrying a stringed musical instrument (*ektārā*) on his shoulder.<sup>2</sup> The rapid flight of this figure has been emphasized by the ribbons and scarves which are shown fluttering in the air behind him. Griffiths has given an admirable drawing of this figure.<sup>3</sup>

On the right side of Indra are two celestial nymphs, one of a dark complexion and the other ruddy (LXVIII). Both of them have lovely features, and the artist has shown much delight in decorating their hair and bodies with flowers and jewellery. The drawing of these figures proves that the artists of Ajanta were fully able to depict their subjects in the round. The nymphs hold a cymbal in each of their hands. The instrument appears to have been a favourite one for marking time from a very early period. In representing the jewels, particularly the sapphires and pearls, the artist has used a thick medium so that they may be prominent in the picture.

The love of the artist for variety of pose can be appreciated by the drawing of the different figures of this subject. The most striking among the group is perhaps the flute-player, who

<sup>1</sup> According to a later development of Buddhist teaching Indra (Sakka) is the ruler of the second heaven of sensual pleasure. He is also described as the lord of the Tushita heaven.

<sup>2</sup> This musical instrument is identical in form with that shown in the Conception scene, painted on the right wall of Cave XVI, Plate LXI (*supra*, p. 66).

<sup>3</sup> *Paintings of Ajanta*, i, 17, fig. 47.



is looking at the nymphs and has turned her back towards the onlooker. Her body is nude down to the waist, and the painter has exhibited his skill in showing all the grace of a short, slender figure. Her coiffure also deserves special notice, the mass of dark hair being arranged in a chignon which is artistically divided into four compartments by means of ribbons. Another artiste below Indra has her hair dressed in Egyptian style. Her complexion is very dark, and she has a *tablā* (circular drum) hung round her back.

The figures painted in the lower part of this fresco, except for a few fragments, have completely decayed. Below the drum-carrier was originally a peafowl perched on the ledge of a hill. The red plumes of its wings can still be traced. Farther down in the belts of conventional hills the figures of two aborigines may also be made out. They have sunburnt red complexions, and one of them is male and the other female. The woman has high cheek-bones and small bright eyes. Her bust is over-developed, and she holds a tray of leaves containing offerings in her left hand. The male figure is armed with a bow. To the right of this pair there is a large blank on the rock-wall, and except for the traces of a large diadem and leaves of some trees nothing has remained. It appears that the figure of a Bodhisattva was painted at this place and that the crown of which traces are visible was worn by him. Above the crown of the Bodhisattva the representations of two peafowl can be traced by their blue necks and reddish wings. To the left of the crown, on the top of a tree, the figure of a monkey may also be made out.

Higher up on the rock-wall the fresco is in a better state of preservation, and a pair of *kinnaras* amidst green hills and luxuriant foliage may be seen. The *kinnaras* according to Indian mythology are heavenly musicians, and they have busts of human beings and the tail feathers and claws of a bird. In the fresco they are playing on cymbals, and the female figure seems to be so overjoyed by the notes of music that she is almost dancing.<sup>1</sup>

The ranges of green hills interspersed with forest belts, although conventional to a degree, are pleasing to the eye and show a refined colour-sense when studied as an integral part of the general scheme of the picture. There were some more figures at the right side of the fresco, but owing to its damaged condition only a pair of dwarfs can be traced now. One of them has a fair and the other a golden complexion; their features and poses have something comic about them.

<sup>1</sup> Griffiths has reproduced a drawing of this pair which shows the pose of the female *kinnara* clearly. *Paintings of Ajanta*, i, 11, fig. 19.



## THE *MĀNUSHI* BUDDHAS AND PAIRS OF *YAKSHAS* AND *YAKSHINĪS*

### *Plates LXIX-LXX*

*The figures are painted above the doorway in two rows, arranged one above the other. They are reproduced in colour, and for the sake of detail an enlargement (LXX) is also given.*

IN the top row the seven *Mānushi* Buddhas and Maitreya are painted. Maitreya according to Buddhist legend will succeed Gautama. Beginning from the left side, the first five figures have dark complexions. They are clad in white robes, but the right arm in the case of the first and third figures is exposed. The first figure is shown in the *dharmacakra mudrā* or teaching attitude, the second in the *dhyāna* or meditative, the third in the *abhaya* or assurance, and the fourth and fifth again in the meditative attitude. Owing to religious conventionalities the features of the first four Buddhas are almost uniform, and they have curled hair with a tuft, *ushnīsha*, on the crown of the head. The lobes of the ear are abnormally long, which feature shows another convention. The figure of the fifth Buddha is slightly slimmer,<sup>1</sup> but the expression of the face is the same in the case of all, and shows internal calm and peace. The sixth Buddha has a reddish or golden complexion, but his robe is of a dark material. He is also represented in the meditative mood. The seventh Buddha, Gautama, is shown in the teaching attitude, and his complexion is reddish (golden?) and his robes saffron coloured. The eighth figure, representing Maitreya, is shown wearing an elaborate crown on his head and other ornaments, such as ear-rings, necklaces, armlets, and *karās* (wristlets), on his body. These ornaments show that he has not yet attained to Buddhahood; but his capacity and inclination are indicated by his meditative mood and hermit-like dress.

All the eight figures originally had trees over their heads, and although those above the first five figures from the left cannot be identified, the trees over the last three Buddhas are clear in the fresco, and they are the banyan over the head of the sixth figure, the *pīpal* over the head of the seventh, and the *śoka* over the head of Maitreya. Below the seats of the Buddhas the artist has painted a creeper design in order to separate the subject from the lower one, which, in contrast to the austerity of the former, betrays a jovial spirit.

The space on the lintel has been divided into eight panels, in which merry couples are shown sipping wine, caressing, or talking in a loving manner. Their attitudes are most graceful and the faces eloquent of love. In the first four panels the male figures are swarthy and the female reddish or brunette. It has been observed elsewhere that Buddhism embraced in its folds people of all races and made no distinction of colour (*varṇa*), as was done by Āryan priests in earlier times. The pose of the male figure in the third panel is particularly striking (LXIX-LXX). It is as if in a love-squabble he has turned his face to one side, and his consort is looking at him appealingly and further to allay his displeasure is pressing his knee and feet with her beautiful hands.

<sup>1</sup> The sculptures of the Buddhas in some caves at Ajanta and Ellora have slim bodies and differ from the conventional type, which appears to be somewhat heavy in proportion.



The figure of the lady in the fourth panel is also admirably drawn. The modelling of her head and body is perfect, showing volume combined with grace. Her complexion is dark brown, but the features are very refined and the delicate fingers, which are almost trembling, indicate a sensitive nature. She is offering a cup of wine to her paramour, who is sitting in front of his lady-love in a careless but characteristically Indian style. The fifth panel represents a pair in close embrace. The male figure in the sixth panel is damaged; but the pair represented in the seventh panel is in a good state of preservation, and the male figure is shown in an attitude of ease, leaning on a round pillow with legs stretched in front. He holds a flower in his right hand, which apparently he wants to present to his sweetheart, who is caressing his body lovingly. The features of the lady in this panel are very graceful. In the eighth panel the heads of the two figures are shown touching one another, an affectionate *tête-à-tête*.

There were similar pairs on the jambs of the door, but nearly all of them have perished now. On the door-frame was a jewellery design, fragments of which exist on the lintel and the side-posts. The sculptures representing *yakshiṇīs*,<sup>1</sup> standing on *makaras* under mango trees (LXIX), show the same grace of line and beauty of form as are displayed in the adjoining frescoes. It appears that from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., that is, during the entire period of the vigour of the Buddhist faith in India, the sister arts of painting and sculpture were inspired and governed by common ideals of religion and culture.

## APSARASES AND GANDHARVAS ADORING THE BUDDHA

### Plates LXXI-LXXII

*The figures are painted on the back wall of the veranda, to the right of the door in Cave XVII. They are reproduced in colour.*

THE fresco is much damaged, particularly the lower part where the figure of a Bodhisattva was painted. It is traced now by two fragments of the diadem, which the Bodhisattva wore on his head. But those figures which remain intact exhibit art of a high order both in conception and in execution. Commencing as usual from the left side, there are piles of blue and white clouds and green hills, amidst which first a pair of *apsarases* is visible. They are two chubby girls; one of a light brown complexion who is making *praṇāma* (obeisance) in a graceful manner. The other is of a darker complexion, and has kept behind her companion, on whose shoulder she has fondly placed her hand. The coiffure of the brunette is simple, and her ornaments also are scanty, except for the rich double belt from which a sword is hung. The coiffure of the darker girl, on the contrary, is very rich, being adorned with pearls and flowers, and she also has an abundance of ornaments on her body, comprising the wheel-pattern large ear-rings, several neck-jewels, armlets, bangles, and eight strings of pearls round her waist. As in making the *praṇāma* the fingers and nails of the brunette are prominent, the artist has drawn and finished them with great care. The features of these *apsarases* show the fusion of several

<sup>1</sup> They may be identified with the river goddesses, Yamunā and Gangā.



racés, aborigines, Scythians, Parthians, and Āryan, who under the influence of Buddhism met freely on an equal footing and intermarried extensively.

In front of the *apsarases*, towards the left, is a mutilated figure representing a young boy (*gandharva*) flying in the air. The flight is indicated by the ribbons of his collar, which are floating backwards horizontally like the flag on a lance. The head of the figure is broken, but the back shows a firm outline and also some shading to suggest the idea of volume.

Below the *gandharva* the head of a hermit with matted hair may be noticed. He is of jet-black complexion, but the colour of his hair is yellowish. The hair of *yogīs* in India gets this colour either through continued exposure to the sun or by their rubbing their hair with ashes. Below the figure of the hermit the torsos of some other figures can also be traced, and the group may represent the monks who were initiated into the Doctrine by the Buddha immediately after his Enlightenment.

At the back of this group are bands of conventional hills, in the midst of which the figure of a peafowl perched on a ledge may be seen. Farther to the right was the figure of the Bodhisattva, which, as stated above, has completely perished, but the hills and the trees of the background show some lovely shades of green. Ferns are noticed sprouting from the crevices of the hills, while towards the left is an *āsoka* tree, the leaves of which apparently through the effect of autumn have turned pale. The choice and blending of colours exhibit a refined taste.

On the right of the green hills there are four *apsarases*, whose heads touch the blue clouds. These figures also are a masterpiece of the drawing and decorative skill of the artist. The *apsaras* (*gandharva*?) in the front, towards the left, has a turban-like headgear richly adorned with strings of pearls and flowers. The features of this figure can be better studied in the enlargement (LXXII). The sharp nose with well-curved nostrils is distinctly Āryan. The eyes are meditative, conventional to a degree, and show affinity to Chinese art. The thin long-drawn eyebrows may remind the modern girl that her sisters in olden times also had a similar fancy regarding the beauty of the eyebrows.

The face has a uniform reddish tint, but the dark outline along the right half of the head and below the chin has made it look almost in relief. The dark background behind the neck and shoulders serves a similar purpose and has produced the effect of volume in the drawing.

The *apsaras* holds cymbals in her hands, and the artist will admire the beauty of the well-set nails and shapely fingers. The painter's love of decorative detail can also be appreciated from the design of the jewellery, in which sapphires and pearls are prominent. The smaller strings of pearls in the necklace are inclined on one side to suggest movement.

Below this figure is another which has been damaged considerably, but the pose of the figure can be easily traced, and it shows that the *apsaras* is almost floating in the air. In the middle of the group is a dark red figure with a sturdy body. It is a *yakṣiṇī* or an amazon. The artist's object in drawing this burly figure was apparently to bring into prominence by contrast the graceful forms of the two *apsarases*, one on either side of it. Behind the figure with heavy limbs there is a dark figure whose hair is adorned with pearls and flowers and the swarthy body brightened by dazzling jewellery and white silk scarves and trail. Below the *apsarases* may be noticed a pair of peafowls, whose orange plumes and blue necks please the eye.



The felicity of expression, the grace of form, and the richness of colouring shown in this fresco indicate the high-water mark to which the art of Ajanta rose in the fifth century A.D. Notwithstanding the obvious religious conventions, the painter's mind has a joyful outlook upon the world's beautiful aspects, and moreover he perceives a kind of spiritual relation between the different forms of life, high or low.

## THE STORY OF THE FURIOUS ELEPHANT NĀLĀGIRI

### *Plates LXXIII-LXXIV*

*The story is painted above the two windows to the right of the main door on the back wall of the veranda of Cave XVII. The first scene, showing the palace and royal stables, is reproduced in monochrome (LXXIII), and the next scene, representing the Buddha in the street, in colour (LXXIV).*

IN the *Vinaya Piṭaka* the story is given in considerable detail, and the main incidents of it agree with those delineated in this fresco.<sup>1</sup> Beginning from the left side of Plate LXXIII, there is a palace which has two stories. In the upper story a king is sitting with a monk on an elaborately carved throne. The king has been identified with Ajātaśatru, and the person dressed like a monk with Devadatta. The latter is suggesting certain plans to the king and has raised two fingers of his right hand to enforce his argument, a gesture still common in India. The king, who is a short corpulent figure, has made another characteristic Indian gesture with his right hand indicating uncertainty. The head of Devadatta is damaged in the fresco, but that of the king is comparatively better preserved, and the features represent a mixed racial type: the nose is sharp, the mouth narrow but with thick lips, and the eyes almond-shaped and fairly large. In the jewellery pearl-strings are prominent; they may be noticed in the ear-rings also. Behind the king's throne there are three ladies. The hair of these ladies has been dressed and decorated in different styles. The lady in the middle is of short stature, and she is wearing a jacket with full sleeves. To the left of the throne is a maid who is looking at the king with considerable astonishment.

Below the royal apartments in the upper story there are two rooms on the ground floor in which the inmates of the palace are shown in pairs. In the apartment to the left of the door

<sup>1</sup> A summary of the story based on Rhys Davids and Oldenberg's translation is given here:

Devadatta, the envious and wicked cousin of Gautama, possessed certain influence over Ajātaśatru, the king of Rājagṛiha. With the help of the latter Devadatta made several attempts to kill the Buddha, but they all proved unsuccessful. In one of these attempts he asked the elephant-keepers of the royal stables to let loose the furious elephant Nālāgiri when the Buddha passed with his disciples through the streets of Rājagṛiha. As Devadatta held out promises of high promotion in their ranks, the elephant-keepers agreed to unchain Nālāgiri at the

time of the Buddha's visit. On the following day when the Master entered the city, his disciples noticed the furious elephant rushing towards them, and being seized with fright they entreated the Buddha to quit the city. The Great Being, however, retained his calm, and when Nālāgiri, after having caused great panic in the street, approached him, he exercised such an influence on the animal that instead of doing any harm it prostrated itself before the Master. The latter stroked its head kindly and admonished it to behave in such a manner as to attain eternal bliss. *Vinaya Texts, Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx, pp. 247-50.



a young noble, prince or minister, is talking to a princess. The gesture, a loop made by his thumb and forefinger, suggests that his mind is in a puzzled state. The lady who is listening to the talk of the chieftain has an expression of anxiety on her face, which is confirmed by the way in which she has placed the forefinger of her left hand on her chin. The drawing of these two figures shows imagination as well as highly developed technical skill. The headgear of the lady is similar to that of the flying figure in the previous subject (Plate LXXII). In the other apartment, on the left, two ladies may be noticed talking together. Their faces bear an expression of sorrow, apparently due to their having heard of the plan which Devadatta has suggested to the king for murdering the Buddha. The curls of the hair of the lady standing close to the pillar are very effective.

From the doorway of the palace a *bhikshu* is passing to the outer court, in the upper part of which are the royal stables. The head of the *bhikshu* is damaged; but the way in which his right hand is stretched out is very characteristic, and he holds something in his palm. In the lower part of the court are some figures, representing apparently the royal guards and the keepers of the stables. As the fresco is badly damaged at this place, only the torsos of these figures can be traced. They are looking towards the stables, and their backs only are visible. One of them is armed with a short curved sword; another has a large curvilinear shield with a check-pattern on its face. From the openings of the stables the heads of three horses may be seen. At the extreme left end the head of an elephant may also be made out. The left ear, the two eyes, and portions of the forehead and trunk are intact, but the rest of the drawing has completely perished. At the right end of the court the outer gate of the palace is seen. It has massive doors of timber, and is further strengthened by cross-bands of iron. Doors of this type are still in vogue in India.

Passing on to Plate LXXIV and starting from the top left corner, we notice that the outer gate of the palace opens on a street which has a row of shops on one side. The shops have awnings of cloth or bamboo matting in front of them, such as are seen in the bazars of India to-day for protection against sun and rain. They are fixed to the wall above the openings of the shops by nails with square heads. The outer ends of the awnings are supported on wooden poles, which are kept at various angles according to the exigencies of weather. Above the shops is a row of balconies, behind which are apparently the dwelling apartments, occupied by shopkeepers or other people of the city. The awning of the first shop was probably dislodged by the furious elephant, which is seen in front of it. The shopkeeper is setting the awning in position. To the right of the shopkeeper another man is looking at the elephant with an expression of fright on his face. Behind the elephant is a dark person riding on a grey horse, who has raised his arm by way of alarm. The horse has a complete head-stall like that used at the present time. In front of this rider there was another with a brown complexion whose bust and the hand in which he holds the reins are quite clear. Behind the elephant, on the opposite side of the street, there is another rider with long dishevelled hair who has also raised his hand to warn the people. The neck and head of his horse are visible, and they show that the animal is of a bay colour. Behind the latter rider there is another wearing a peaked cap of Persian design. Only the grey neck of his horse is visible, the head being concealed by another subject



painted in the lower part of the fresco. The elephant has caused considerable havoc in the street, for a man is held up between his tusks and the neck of a grey horse is encircled by the lower part of his trunk. The horse seems to be in a state of great agony, for it has opened its mouth and exposed the teeth as if to cry. The elephant is of gigantic size, and the painter, further to show that he belongs to the royal stables, has decorated him with pearl ornaments, placing them round his trunk, forehead, and neck. Among other adornments are bunches of yak's hair attached to his ears and ribbons and flags tied round his body. The animal is of a light grey colour.

The panic caused by the letting loose of the elephant can be judged by a running figure whose legs are visible on the shops-side of the street. The gestures of the ladies watching the scene from the first two balconies from the left also express anxiety and concern. Of the two ladies in the first balcony, the fair one has placed her hand on her breast, and the other, who is of a dark complexion, has turned the fingers of her hands emotionally on one side to express feelings of uncertainty regarding the safety of the life of the Buddha. In the second balcony also are two ladies, and the fair one has placed her hand on her head, another characteristic gesture indicating dismay. In this balcony the other lady is in a pensive mood, as is shown by the manner in which her chin rests on her hand, and also by the gesture of her right hand.

A little farther on, in the same street, the elephant is seen again. He has prostrated himself before the Buddha, who is stroking the head of the animal with feelings of love. This agrees with the version given in the *Vinaya Texts*.<sup>1</sup> Close to the Buddha, on his right, is a monk who is looking at the Master with surprise. He may be identified with Sāriputta, for his name is mentioned in the *Vinaya Texts* where the various evil plans of Devadatta to murder the Buddha and to establish himself in the Master's place are described.<sup>2</sup> The Buddha is shown standing on a lotus, and he as well as Sāriputta hold begging-bowls in their left hands, which shows that they had entered the city to collect alms. Behind the Buddha are two men, whose positions in the fresco indicate that at first through fright they ran away from the street, but on seeing that the furious elephant has placed his head and rolled trunk at the feet of the Great Being they turn their necks and look at the Master with surprise. The inmates of the shops also have been impressed by the miracle, and they are adoring the Buddha. They have joined their hands and stretched them towards the Buddha in the usual Indian style. The pose of the figure nearest the Buddha is the most devotional: his head and back are bent in the act of worship. The smartly dressed ladies watching the scene from the balconies hold flowers and garlands in their hands to shower them on the elephant and on the Buddha.

The heads of some figures may be traced behind the elephant and also on the other side of the street facing the shops. In drawing the figures of the ladies sitting in the balconies, the artist has exhibited both imagination and technical skill, but the composition of the entire subject would appeal more to a lover of the legend than to the lover of art, for the two large representations of the elephant have covered almost the entire space, and the figures of the Buddha and his chief disciple show little spontaneity or freedom of expression, qualities which are essential to art of a high class.

<sup>1</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, xx, 249.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240 ff.



In the lower part of the fresco another subject was painted, a portion of which, to the left of the window in the veranda, can be made out. It represents a building with a pillared hall in front and a walled apartment behind, the door of which opens on the hall. Above the pillars is a sloping *chhajjā*, and higher up a triangular ornamental frieze, which in the middle has pillars and an opening in the style of the window of the *chaitya* cave 10 (Viśvakarmā) at Ellora. In the sides of the frieze figures of geese with ornamented tails may be seen, while above the window is drawn the head of a tiger or lion which is more ornamental than realistic.

In the hall a lady of high position is shown leaning on a bolster. There is another lady sitting quite close to her. Two maids can be made out behind the bolster and two more in front, who are standing near the pillars. A male figure is shown in the doorway leading to the inner apartment. He may be a servant. There was another figure, probably representing a maid, whose bust is broken, but the lower part of the body can be traced. The drawing has become very faint, and it is difficult to identify the subject or to study its artistic merits, except for the coiffures of the ladies, which exhibit considerable decorative skill.







# APPENDIX

## A NOTE ON THE PAINTED INSCRIPTIONS IN CAVES VI-XVII

By DR. N. P. CHAKRAVARTI

IN the subjoined note the painted inscriptions<sup>1</sup> in Caves VI-XVII at Ajanta have been included.<sup>2</sup> Such records are now found only in Caves VI, IX, X, XVI, and XVII. In the last-mentioned cave only the inscriptions in the veranda have been included in this Part. Many of these records in Caves IX, X, XVI, and XVII have already been read by Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji and published by Burgess in *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, Memoir No. 10, *Inscriptions from the Cave-Temples of Western India* with Descriptive Notes, &c., 1881, pp. 82-7, and illustrated with plates. The inscriptions in Caves IX, X, and XVI were again published by Burgess (revised by Bühler) in the *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, Vol. IV (*Reports on the Buddhist Cave-Temples and their Inscriptions*, being part of the results of the fourth, fifth, and sixth season's operations of the Archaeological Survey of Western India, 1876-7, 1877-8, 1878-9) issued in 1883 as supplementary to the volume on *The Cave-Temples of India*. The inscriptions have further decayed since Indraji deciphered them, and while a few have altogether disappeared, owing to the pillars on which they were originally found being broken and lost in some cases, or the plaster on the wall on which they were written having given way, a few new ones have come to light. All these details have been noticed in connexion with the study of each individual inscription, and only a brief synopsis of the contents of these records is given below.

*Cave VI* (Pl. I a). This cave contains only one votive inscription, recording the gift of the Śākya monk Taraṇakīrttana (?).

*Cave IX* (Pls. I b-c and II a-e). Altogether twelve inscriptions have been noticed in this *chaitya* cave, including No. 10 below, which is now missing. All are votive inscriptions, eight of which are fragmentary and have not preserved the names of the donors. The donors of the remaining four are the Śākya monk Saṅghapriya (No. 11), the lay worshipper Jasadeva (Yaśodeva) (No. 2), the Śākya monk bhadanta Bhadrasena (No. 7), and bhadanta Dharmasena (No. 12).

*Cave X* (Pls. III-VI). This is a *chaitya* cave which contains the largest number of painted

<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking these should be called painted records and labels and not inscriptions, as the characters in these are not incised. I have, however, preferred to use the term 'inscription' in the loose sense of 'writing', as has been done by all the scholars who have dealt with these records previously.

<sup>2</sup> Painted inscriptions in Cave II have been dealt with by Mr. John Allan in the Appendix of *Ajanta*, Text, Pt. II, pp. 57-64. I may, however, take this opportu-

nity of pointing out that in No. 11 of Allan's inscription the second line correctly reads *Budha(ddha-)sahasraṃ*, or 'thousand Buddhas'. Apparently the Buddhist lay worshipper whose name is lost in the record wanted to donate the figures of one thousand Buddhas. Cave II at Ajanta reminds one of the 'Cave of the Thousand Buddhas' at Tun-Huang in Central Asia, and this also should perhaps be properly named the 'Cave of the Thousand Buddhas'.



inscriptions. Twenty-one such records have been noticed in this cave, including the four which cannot be traced at present. Of these inscriptions No. 1 (Pl. III) is the earliest, being almost contemporaneous with the inscription of Vāsiṭhīputa Kaṭahādi, a record of whose gift of the façade is found engraved on the façade of this cave. Of the remaining twenty, all of which are votive records, seven are fragmentary and twelve contain the names of the following donors: āchārya Sachiva (No. 2), Śākya monk bhadanta Saṁghagupta (No. 4), Śākya monk āchārya bhadanta Buddhasena (No. 5), bhadanta Buddhasoma (?) (No. 6), Śākya monk Buddha[so\*]ma (No. 7), Śākya monk bhadanta Keśava (No. 8), Śākya monk Buddhināga (No. 9), Śākya monk bhadanta Drāḍhadharma (No. 11), Śākya monk bhadanta Droṇavarmman (No. 12), bhadanta Sudatta (Nos. 18-19), and bhadanta Śīlabhadra (No. 21). It is not certain whether No. 14, which records the donation of a figure of Vipāśvin, the nineteenth of the twenty-four Buddhas, contains the name of the donor or of his office.

*Cave XVI* (Pls. VII-VIII). There are altogether three donatory inscriptions in this cave, the donors being the Śākya monk bhadanta Dharmadatta (Nos. 1-2) and the Śākya monk bhadanta Bāpuka (No. 3).

On the back wall of the veranda to the right of the entrance, where scenes from the Viśvantara Jātaka are painted, are found the names of the principal characters in the Jātaka story painted under the respective figures (Pl. VIII c-e). It may be mentioned in this connexion that the Pāli version calls the prince Vessantara and Āryasūra Viśvantara, while the name Vaiśvantara is given to him in these frescoes.

*Cave XVII* (Pl. IX). There are no votive inscriptions found in this cave, but there are a few labels illustrating the figure of the Yaksha Maṇibhadra and a scene from the Śibi Jātaka.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words on the age of the caves themselves and that of the painted records found therein, as far as it can be judged from palaeographic evidence only. As regards the caves themselves, Fergusson and Burgess have classified them according to three distinct divisions. According to these scholars, whose opinion has gained acceptance, the *chaitya* Caves IX and X and the *vihāras* XII and XIII are the earliest and must have been excavated before the commencement of the Christian era. They place Cave XI at a date later than Cave X and Caves VI-VIII at an even later period, ranging in date from the fifth to the end of the sixth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> The palaeographical evidence, wherever any is available, also points to almost the same conclusion. The two earliest inscriptions in Brāhmī characters are found in Caves X and XII. The epigraph in Cave X is engraved on the left side of the façade and records the 'gift of the façade by Vāsiṭhīputa Kaṭahādi', and that in Cave XII is found on the back wall of Cave XII and records the 'gift of a shrine (*thānaka*) with inner chambers (*uvavaraka*, Pāli, *ovaraka*, Skt. *apavaraka*) and an abode (for monks) (*upā[saya\*]*, Pāli *upassaya*) by the merchant Ghanāmadāḍa'. Burgess and Fergusson are of opinion that of the two *chaitya* caves IX is earlier than X, and the two *vihāras* are perhaps again earlier than the two *chaitya* caves, as in the opinion of these scholars a *vihāra*, i.e. a residence for monks, should precede the construction of a *chaitya*.<sup>2</sup> While no palaeographic evidence is forthcoming in

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the date of Cave XI see Mr. Yazdani's opinion expressed on p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the dates of Caves IX and X see Mr. Yazdani's remarks on pp. 2-3. Both on palaeographic



finding the relative antiquity of the two *chaitya* caves and the two *vihāras*, the inscription in Cave XII is decidedly of a later date than that of Cave X. Moreover, the inscription in Cave X records the gift only of the façade, which therefore presupposes the existence of the *chaitya*, while the record in Cave XII seems to indicate that the *vihāra*, as it stood at the time of the inscription, was the gift of the merchant Ghanāmadada. It can therefore be stated with sufficient certainty that the *chaitya* Cave X is of an earlier date than Cave XII.

The other caves where inscriptions are found incised are Caves XVI, XVII, XX, XXVI, and XXVII. We know from a fragmentary inscription in Cave XVI that this cave was excavated by order of Varāhadeva, minister of the Vākāṭaka king Harisheṇa. Varāhadeva dedicated this cave dwelling, 'adorned with windows, doors, rows of beautiful pictures, ledges, statues of celestial nymphs, and the like, and supported by beautiful pillars, and with a temple of Buddha inside',<sup>1</sup> to the Buddhist Saṅgha in remembrance of his father Hastibhoja and his mother, whose name is not mentioned in the record. Varāhadeva was a devout Buddhist and was responsible also for the excavation of the Ghaṭotkacha cave eleven miles to the west of Ajanta, as is known from an inscription on the left end of the back wall of that cave. Both the records of Varāhadeva are undated, but, as Professor Mirashi has shown, Harisheṇa, the last known ruler of the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭakas, should be assigned a period between A.D. 475-500,<sup>2</sup> and therefore the excavation of Cave XVI must have been completed about the end of the fifth century A.D., to which period Fergusson and Burgess also assign this cave from the style of architecture. There is also no doubt that Cave XVII must be placed in the same period, as a fragmentary inscription on the side wall of the veranda in this cave mentions the same Vākāṭaka ruler Harisheṇa as the ruling prince in line 21. According to this record this cave seems to have been dedicated by Achitya, the minister of a feudatory of the Vākāṭakas. Unfortunately the name of the feudatory ruler is not preserved, though the names of his ancestors and also of his younger brother are given in the record. The donor is stated to have built this gem of a temple of solid stone containing inside a *chaitya* of the Buddha (*niveśitāntar-munirāja-chaityam-ekāśmakam maṇḍaparatanam-etat*). He also built a large reservoir<sup>3</sup> and, on the other side of it, towards the west, a *gandhakuṭī* (vv. 24-7). Burgess points out that there is no *gandhakuṭī* immediately to the west, though there are sculptures of the Buddha on the lower parts of the walls of the court.<sup>4</sup>

Turning to the painted inscriptions in these caves, we find that so little of these is now left that it is difficult to come to a very definite conclusion regarding their age. From what is left of them and from the evidence of other engraved records found in these caves which have been noticed above, we shall not be far from the mark if we place most of these painted records, and therefore the paintings on which they are found, in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., with the exception of a few in Caves IX and X. In the latter cave there is a painted

and architectural evidence he considers Cave X to be the earlier of the two. He has placed Cave X in the second century B.C., while Cave IX in his opinion 'cannot be earlier than the first century B.C.'

<sup>1</sup> See Mirashi, *Vākāṭaka Inscription in Cave XVI at Ajanta* (Hyderabad Archl. Series, No. 14), p. 12, v. 24.

Here I have followed Mirashi in the interpretation of *vithi*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Burgess identifies this reservoir with the cistern below Cave XVIII, see *A.S.W.I.*, vol. iv, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.



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inscription (No. 1), of which unfortunately only a few letters now remain. They, however, show that the record is to be dated at an earlier period, probably about the middle of the second century B.C., as the script seems to be of a time only slightly later than that of the inscription of Kaṭahādi, which on palaeographic grounds should be ascribed to the beginning of the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The painting on which this inscription is found seems undoubtedly to be coeval with the inscription and should therefore also belong to the second century B.C. If this dating is correct, the art of mural painting must have been very well developed in the Deccan long before the commencement of the Christian era.

### THE PAINTED INSCRIPTIONS

#### CAVE VI

There is now only one inscription found in this cave (Pl. I a). It is found in the left corridor to the right of the first cell-door (upper floor). The record, which is in three lines and partly effaced, reads :

- 1 Deyadharmmo<sup>\*</sup>yaṁ śākyabhi[ksh<sup>\*</sup>]o - taraṇakīrtt.
- 2 sya yadatra puṇ[y]aṁ - - - [tu]<sup>2</sup> sar[v]va - satvānā -
- 3 m<sup>3</sup>a[nuttara - jñān - ā] - - -<sup>3</sup>

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk Taraṇa-kīrttana (?). Whatever merit is there, let that be for attainment of supreme knowledge by all sentient beings.'

Line 1. There seem to be traces of a syllable after *ksho* which I cannot definitely restore. Probably we have to restore the name as *Taraṇakīrttana*.

Line 2. Restore *tadbhavatu*.

Line 3. Restore *jñān-āvāptaye*.

This inscription has not been noticed by Burgess. It is written below a figure which is badly damaged. To the left of the record there is the figure of a man with the right knee bent and holding something in his left hand, with right hand raised. Probably this is meant to be the figure of the monk who dedicated the painting.

#### CAVE IX

There are altogether eleven painted inscriptions extant in this cave, the twelfth one noticed below being now missing.

1. This inscription (Pl. I b) is found on the front wall of the cave (interior) near the door, close to the head of the Buddha (according to Burgess the figure of a *bhikṣu*). The record has suffered much since it was noticed by Burgess.<sup>4</sup> Only traces of four lines now remain which read :

- 1 [Deyadharmmo<sup>\*</sup>]yaṁ śāk[yabh<sup>\*</sup>]i[ksh]o -
- 2 [s<sup>2</sup>sa]ṅghappra[i<sup>\*</sup>] [yasya]
- 3 mātā . . . . .
- 4 - - - - -

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk Saṅghapriya.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mr. Yazdani's remarks, *supra*, p. 1, f.n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Traces of these two letters are visible on the plate given by Burgess.

<sup>3</sup> *Descriptive Notes, etc.*, p. 82, No. 9, and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 138, No. 1, and pl. LIX, No. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Traces of three letters are visible on Burgess's plate.



THE PAINTED INSCRIPTIONS IN CAVES VI-XVII

2. On the first pillar of the aisle on the left side, under the figure of a standing Buddha (Pl. I c). Inscription in two lines.<sup>1</sup>

1 Deyadharmmo[yaṁ]<sup>2</sup> [upāsa]ka-Jasa[de]-

2 vasya

'This is the meritorious gift of the lay worshipper, Jasadeva (Yaśodeva)'

3. On the same pillar over the canopy of the Buddha. Not read by Burgess (Pl. II a).<sup>3</sup> One line.

[De]yadharm[m]o[yaṁ] śākyabhi[kshor]bhadaṁta - - - - sya.

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend - - - -'

4. On the same pillar in the petals of a lotus below the figure of a standing Buddha. Not read by Burgess.<sup>4</sup>

Deyadhar[mm\*]o[yaṁ] śākyabhiksho - - -

The inscription is in white paint and can be clearly read on the pillar, though on the photograph it is very faint.

5. On the fourth pillar on the left side (Pl. II b). Two lines. Not read by Burgess.<sup>5</sup>

1 Deyaddha(dha)rmmo[yaṁ] śākyabhiksho bhadaṁta-[āchārya?] - - - -

2 [se]nasya<sup>6</sup>

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend teacher -- sena'

6. On the eighth pillar on the left side, on an umbrella (Pl. II c). Two lines. Not read by Burgess.<sup>7</sup>

1 Deyadharmm[o]yaṁ śākya - - [ā]chārya<sup>8</sup>-bhadaṁta - - - -<sup>9</sup> [ya]dātra punyaṁ tta(ta) -

2 [d]bha\*[vatu m[āṭā\*] - pitro - - - - -

7. On the ninth pillar on the left side (Pl. II d), below the figure of a Buddha.<sup>10</sup> One line.

Deyadharmm[o]yaṁ śākyabhi[ksho bhadaṁta<sup>11</sup>-Bhadra][senasya\*]<sup>12</sup>

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend Bhadrāsena'

8. On the back wall of the cave under a painted *chaitya*.<sup>13</sup> One line. Characters bigger in size than is usual in this cave. Fragmentary (Pl. II e).

[D\*]eyaddha(dha)rm[m]o[yaṁ]<sup>14</sup> [bha - - sya m.]<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burgess, *Descriptive Notes*, p. 83, No. 10, and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 136, p. 2, and pl. LIX, No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> This syllable has been supplied. The whole record is quite clear in Burgess's plate.

<sup>3</sup> See *Descriptive Notes*, p. 83, last para. of No. 10.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.* The third fragment noticed by Burgess is now missing.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 83, No. 11, para. 3. No. 11 of Burgess is now missing.

<sup>6</sup> Probably we have to restore as Dharma- or Bhadrāsena; see *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, Nos. 3 and 5.

<sup>7</sup> See *Descriptive Notes*, p. 83, No. 11, para. 4. Burgess notes another mutilated inscription on the third standing pillar which is now missing.

<sup>8</sup> Restore as śākyabhikshor-āchārya.

<sup>9</sup> Only the first syllable of the name is partly visible.

<sup>10</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 83, No. 13, and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 137, No. 5, and pl. LXI, No. 5.

<sup>11</sup> This record is much clearer in Burgess's plate. Burgess and Indrajī read *bhikshor-bhadaṁta*, but there is no *repha* sign visible on *bha*.

<sup>12</sup> *se* is clear on Burgess's plate but now effaced.

<sup>13</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 83, No. 12 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 137, No. 4 and pl. LXI, No. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Supplied.  
<sup>15</sup> Taken from Burgess's plate; now missing, except a portion of the first syllable. Probably to be restored as *bhadaṁtasya*. According to Burgess the language is Pāli, but it is only incorrect Sanskrit. The *Descriptive Notes* mention two other fragments on this same wall which are now missing.



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9. On the first pillar at the back, close to the ninth pillar on the right side. Fragmentary; only a few letters remain.

10. On the ninth pillar, right side, below the figure of a standing Buddha. Illegible.

11. On the third pillar, right side. Not noticed by Burgess. One line; fragment.

D[e\*][ya]dharmo~~ya~~m śākyabhi[ksh]o - - - -

12. Burgess notices an inscription on a jamb attached to the first pillar, under the throne of a seated figure of the Buddha.<sup>1</sup> This pillar is now broken and lost and the inscription missing. The plate as given by Burgess is quite clear; according to it the reading is:

Deyadharmo~~ya~~m bhada(dam)ta<sup>2</sup> - [Dha]rmasena[sya],

‘This is the meritorious gift of the reverend Dharmasena.’

According to Burgess the script of this inscription is somewhat earlier than Nos. 1 and 2 above.

## CAVE X

1. On the left wall opposite the third column (Pl. III). This inscription is the most important of all the painted records found at present in the caves at Ajanta in that it is decidedly the earliest. Unfortunately it was badly damaged when Burgess noticed it for the first time in 1881, and it has suffered further since that date. Burgess's plate shows that even then the upper portions of most of the letters were destroyed, making the reading and interpretation uncertain. The later inscriptions at Ajanta are painted either in black or white, but this particular inscription is painted in dark brown. The script of this record is slightly later than that of the inscription of Vāsiṭhīputa Kaṭahādi which is engraved on the left side of the arch of this same *chaitya* cave. This is also the only painted inscription of which the language is decidedly Prākṛit. As the inscription is found written on the painting itself it is certain that this portion of the painting in this cave at Ajanta must also belong to the time of the inscription. What remains of this record now may be read as:

[Bha]ga[va]sa yat. puvadeva[sa] - - - - -

Though the first and third letters from the beginning are not quite clear now, the reading *Bhagavasa* is quite certain from Burgess's plate. The *ya* after *sa* is quite legible and it does not appear to have contained any vowel-mark on the top. The next letter is certainly *t*, but the vowel *mātrā* it might have had originally has now disappeared altogether. After this the reading of *puvad[e]va* is almost certain, though the *e mātrā* of *d* is now missing. The fragmentary letter after *va* seems to be the remains of a *sa*, though it is not quite clear on Burgess's plate. All the letters after this are now illegible on the wall, but a few more of them can be read from Burgess's plate. One or two letters, however, seem to be missing after *devasa*, and the first letter visible after *devasa* may be fragments of a *ta*, which appears to be followed by *na*, which Indrajī has read as *ya*. One or two letters may again be missing after this, but the next extant letter may be *ti*. The next five letters are quite clear and may be read as *patisa yasa*. The rest of

<sup>1</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 83, No. 11 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, No. 3 and pl. LIX, No. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Burgess, *bhadanta*.



the inscription is missing in Burgess's plate. Thus the inscription may have to be restored as follows:

Bhagavasa yat. puvadevasa -- t.n. ti patisa yasa ---

Undoubtedly the inscription refers to the Lord Buddha, though the sense is not quite clear. In Pāli *puvadeva* means 'a god of old' and when used in the plural number usually refers to 'the Asuras'. One thing, however, is clear, and this is that this was not a votive record but served as an explanatory note of the scene represented in the painting, which may have been from the life of the Buddha.

The script, as far as can be made out from the few extant letters, shows a similarity with that found in the Bharaut inscriptions, and may be assigned approximately to the same period as the Bharaut inscriptions, viz. about the middle of the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

2. On the left wall opposite the space between the fifth and sixth columns.<sup>2</sup> Fragmentary; three lines (Pl. IVa).

1 [Ā]chāryya ----- Sachivasya

2 d[eyadha]rmm[o] yadatra puṇyaṁ tadabhavatu sa[rvva\*] [sa]-

3 tvānā[m] du -----

'(This is) the meritorious gift of the teacher ----- Sachiva. Whatever merit is in this let that be for (removing the misery) of all sentient beings.'

This inscription has suffered most since the time of Burgess. In line 1 the sign for *ā* in *āchāryya* is partly visible in Burgess's plate. In line 2 *ya* and *dha* as well as the sign for *o* in *rmmo* are legible in Burgess's plate. Similarly *sarvvasa* is also quite clear at the end of the line in the same plate. In line 3 nothing is legible now after *du*, but Burgess's plate clearly shows *duḥkha-mochā*—which is apparently a misreading for *duḥkha-mocha[nāya\*]*.

Burgess notices another inscription on the same wall written on a thin white ground. It was faded even in his time, and no trace of it can be found at present.

3. On the ninth pillar, left side, on umbrella above the head of a Buddha. Not noticed by Burgess. Fragment; one line.

Deya[dharmmo]yaṁ [śākya]bhikṣho[r\*] bhadaṁta-[āchāryya-śā] --

4. On the same pillar under the figure of the Buddha. The writing has become very faint and illegible. Possibly this is the one mentioned by Burgess in *Descriptive Notes*, p. 85, No. 18, line 2.

5. On the same pillar, only the figure of a Buddha painted white (Pl. IVb). Reads: Tasyaiva.

As pointed out by Burgess this painting also must have been the donation of the person whose name was mentioned in the previous inscription.<sup>3</sup>

6. On the same pillar below the figure of a standing Buddha. Not noticed by Burgess. Inscription obliterated and illegible.

<sup>1</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 84, No. 14 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 137, No. 6 and pl. LIX. See also Lüders, *List of Brāhmī Inscriptions*, No. 1199, and *supra*, p. 1, f.n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 84, No. 15 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 137, No. 7 and pl. LXI.

<sup>3</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 85, No. 18 and pl.



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7. On the tenth pillar, left side, on the umbrella over the figure of a Buddha.<sup>1</sup> One line (Pl. IVc).

Deyadharm[m]o = yaṁ śākyabhikṣor = bhadaṁta - Saṁghaguptasya

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend Saṁghagupta.'

8. On the seventeenth pillar, left side, below a seated figure of the Buddha.<sup>2</sup> Fragmentary; three lines. The inscription as far as it is preserved reads:

1 ----- guṇo ----- yā bhāsurad[i]ptayas=te

2 ----- yanābh. -- ye kārayanti=ha jīnasya bimbam=

3 [Deyadha]rm[m]o = yaṁ [ś]ākyabhikṣo[rāchā\*]r[ya] - bhada[m\*]ta - [Bu\*]ddhasenasya

Line 3. 'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend teacher Buddhasena.'

The first two lines contain a verse in *upaiṭi* metre describing the merit accruing to those who dedicated the images of the Buddha. The same verse also occurs in Cave XXII, and can be reconstructed as follows:

Saurūpya-saubhāgya-guṇ-opapannā

guṇ-endriye bhāsuradīptayas=te

bhavanti te<sup>3</sup> nayan - ābhirāmā

ye kārayanti=ha jīnasya bimbam

9. On the eighteenth pillar, left side, below a figure of the Buddha (Pl. Va). Not read by Burgess and Indrajī.<sup>4</sup> Fragmentary; two lines.

1 Deyadharmmo=yaṁ bha[daṁta] -

2 [Buddha][soma]sya

'This is the meritorious gift of reverend Buddhasoma.'

10. On the twelfth pillar, right side, over the umbrella (Pl. Vb). Not noticed by Burgess. Fragmentary; three lines:

1 Deyadharmmo=yaṁ śākyabhikṣ[or=] Buddha - ma-<sup>5</sup>

2 mātā - pita[ram = uddiśya] sa[rvva]-satvā - - - -

3 nā - - -<sup>6</sup>

11. On the tenth pillar, right side, near the feet of a figure of the Buddha.<sup>7</sup> Four lines (Pl. Vd).

1 Mātā-pi-

2 taram=udi(ddi)śya

3 [sarva]

4 [Deyadha]<sup>8</sup>[rmmo=yaṁ śākyabhikṣor\*]=bhadanta-Keśavasya

'For the sake of father and mother and all - - - - this is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend Keśava.'

<sup>1</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 85, No. 21 and pl.; *A.S.W.I.*, vol. iv, p. 137, No. 12 and pl. LXI.

<sup>2</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 86, No. 24 and pl.; see also plate reproduced above.

<sup>3</sup> One long syllable is wanting here. Read *ch-aite*.

<sup>4</sup> See *Descriptive Notes*, p. 86, No. 24, last para., line 1.

<sup>5</sup> Probably this should be corrected to *Buddhasomasya*.

<sup>6</sup> Ordinarily the restoration would be *satvānām-anuttara-jñān-āvāptaye*. But no traces of any letters are now found after *tvā* in line 2, and there seems to have been only one letter after *nā* in line 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 86, No. 23 and pl.

<sup>8</sup> Not visible now, but clear in Burgess's plate.



# THE PAINTED INSCRIPTIONS IN CAVES VI-XVII

There is no room for more than one letter after *sarva* in line 3; probably the usual formula was continued at the beginning of line 4 which is now effaced. There is a figure of a Buddhist monk to the left of the inscription in a sitting posture and offering incense, which is apparently meant to be the figure of the monk Keśava, the donor. There are two other figures sitting opposite, which may represent either votaries or parents of the monk.

12. On the same pillar, below the feet of the figure of a Buddha (Pl. V c). Not noticed by Burgess. Fragmentary. One line.

Only [Śā]kya[bh]i-----tā-pita[ra\*]mudi(ddi)śya is visible.

13. On the right wall under the twentieth rib<sup>1</sup> (Pl. VI a). One line. Not read by Burgess-Indraji.

Deyadharmmo<sup>2</sup>yaṁ śvā(śā)kyabhiksho[r]Vu(Bu)ddhi[nā]gasya . [su]<sup>3</sup> karaṇḍ[ā]tra baśa

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk Buddhinaṅga-----'

Burgess notices 'a few letters of an inscription in longer characters' under the fourth, fifth, and sixth ribs and fragments of another in two lines under the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth ribs, which are now altogether effaced.

14. On the seventh pillar, right side, below the figure of a standing Buddha on a green ground.<sup>3</sup> One line (Pl. VI b).

Vi[pa\*]śv[i] samya[k]-saṁbu[ddhaḥ] Chetika - . ikasya

'Vipaśvin, the perfectly enlightened. (This is the gift) of Parika of the Chetika (school) (?)'

Indraji and Bühler read Vipassī, but the reading is clearly śv, probably with the vowel sign 7. Bühler's wrong reading is due to the defective plate, in which the second consonant looks like ś. Both Indraji and Bühler read *Chetika(ya)rikasya*, i.e. 'of Chetikayarika'. The fourth syllable has now completely disappeared and of the fifth only the *i* sign is now visible. But from Burgess's plate the reading *ri* seems to be certain, though I am not at all sure of the reading of the previous letter as *ya*, which to me seems more like the fragments of *pa* or *pu*.

It may be noted here that the name of this Buddha is spelt as Vipāśvī (Pāli, *Vipassi*) also in Cave XXII and not as Vipāśyin.

15. On the sixth pillar, right side, at the feet of the Buddha.<sup>4</sup> Three lines (Pl. VI c).

1 Deya[dha . . yaṁ]<sup>5</sup> śākya-

2 bhikshor**ṣ**bhadanta-Drāḍha-

3 [dha]rm[m]asya

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend Drāḍhadharma.'

16. On the fifth pillar, right side, below the figure of the Buddha (Pl. VI d). Not noticed by Burgess. Three lines in white letters.

<sup>1</sup> See *Descriptive Notes*, p. 86, No. 24, last para., line 3.

<sup>2</sup> Reading uncertain; may be [hastā]. Perhaps this is the label of a Jātaka scene represented here.

<sup>3</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 85, No. 17 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*,

vol. iv, p. 137, No. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 84, No. 16 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 137 and pl.

<sup>5</sup> Read *dharmo<sup>2</sup>yaṁ*, which is clear in Burgess's plate.



## APPENDIX

- 1 Deyadharmmo~~ya~~m śā-
- 2 kyabhiksh[or~~o~~] bhadanta-Dro-
- 3 ṇa[va]rmmasya

‘This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, the reverend Droṇavarman.’

17. On the second pillar, right side, below the figure of the Buddha. Not noticed by Burgess. Inscription in three lines; badly effaced. The first line is written in much bigger characters than the other two. The first and the third lines are much shorter than the second. Only the word *mātā* is clear in the middle of the second line, and traces of a few letters are visible in the third.

- 1 [Deya]ddha(dha)rm[o] ya[m]
- 2 ----- mātā -----
- 3 -----

18-21. Burgess notices a few other inscriptions in this cave which are now missing. They are:

- (1) On the eighth pillar on the left side, on the lotus under the feet of a standing Buddha.<sup>1</sup>

Bhadanta-Sudattasya

‘Of the reverend Sudatta.’

- (2) On another side of the same pillar, also on a lotus under a seated Buddha, with a kneeling figure on each side of the lotus stalk, but the inscription is mutilated.<sup>2</sup> Also reads:

[Bhada\*]nta-Sudattasya

This pillar is now broken and the inscriptions are missing.

- (3) On the sixth standing pillar, on the left side. Traces of a few letters on an umbrella.<sup>3</sup>

- (4) On the fifth pillar on the right side, below a standing figure of Buddha. Two lines.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 Deyaddha(dha)rmmo~~ya~~m bhadanta - Śīlabhadrasya mātā -
- 2 pitaram~~udi~~(ddi) [śya\*]

‘This meritorious gift of the reverend Śīlabhadra in honour of father and mother.’

This inscription could not be traced, but for another inscription on the same pillar see No. 16 above.

## CAVE XVI

On the left wall of this cave there are two series of seated Buddhas painted one above the other. There are altogether three votive inscriptions in this cave, two of which are above the door of the third cell and one in the upper row of the Buddhas, below the seat of the third from the left. The names of donors are written also on the pedestals of some of these figures. All three have been noticed by Burgess and transcribed by Indrajī and Bühler.

<sup>1</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 85, No. 19 and pl.; *A.S.W.I.*, vol. iv, p. 137, No. 10 and pl. LIX.

<sup>2</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 86, lines 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 85, No. 20 and pl.; *A.S.W.I.*, vol. iv, p. 137, No. 11 and pl. LIX.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86, No. 22 and pl.; *A.S.W.I.*, vol. iv, p. 138, No. 13 and pl. LIX.



# THE PAINTED INSCRIPTIONS IN CAVES VI-XVII

1. Inscription below the first and the second seated Buddhas in the lower series.<sup>1</sup> Three lines (Pl. VIIa).

1 Deyadharmmo~~ya~~m śākyabhikshor~~bh~~(b)hadanta - Dharmmadattasya yad~~a~~tra puṇyaṁ

2 tad~~bh~~avatu mātā - pitro~~s~~[sa]rvvasatvānāñ~~ch~~ānuttara - jñā[nāvā]pta-

3 ye[ssuḥ]<sup>2</sup>

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend Dharmadatta. Whatever merit is in this, let that be for the attainment of supreme knowledge by his father and mother and also by all sentient beings.'

2. Below the figures of the third and the fourth Buddhas in the same series.<sup>3</sup> Two lines (Pl. VIIb).

1 Deya[dha]rmmo~~ya~~m śākyabhikshor~~bh~~(b)hadanta-Dharmmadat[t]asya [ya]d~~a~~tra [puṇyaṁ\*]<sup>4</sup>

2 tad~~bh~~avatu [m]ātā - pitro~~s~~sarvvasatvānāñ~~ch~~ānuttara - jñān - āvāptaye

Translation as preceding.

3. Below the figure of the third Buddha on the top row.<sup>5</sup> Three lines (Pl. VIIc).

1 Deyadharmmo~~ya~~m śākyabhiksh[o]r~~bh~~(b)hadanta - Bāp[u]kasya

2 yad~~a~~tra [pu]ṇyaṁ tad~~bh~~avatu mātā - pitro[h\*] sarvva - [sa]tvānāñ~~ch~~ā-

3 mā nuttara - jñān - āvāp[t]aye

'This is the meritorious gift of the Śākya monk, reverend Bāpuka', etc.

Line 1. Indrajī and Bühler read the name of the donor as Dāpuka. From an examination of the original I find that the first syllable is a faded *ba*. That the name is Bāpuka is also clear from its being written in three other places as noticed below.

Line 2. The symbol at the beginning of this line Indrajī takes to be a mark of continuation. I would prefer to read it as an ordinary *ma* which is superfluous. The mistake is due to a confusion of the scribe with the more common expression of the formula as *satvānāñanuttara*.

Each of these series apparently contained the figures of the eight *mānushi* Buddhas. In the lower row only four of these figures are now intact. Those inscriptions which give the name of the donor as Bhadanta-Dharmmadattasya, 'of the reverend Dharmadatta', are still partly or wholly visible on the pedestals of all the four figures. On the top row also, only four figures are now intact. On one of these (fourth from the left), within one of the petals of the lotus seat, is found an inscription which reads Bāpukasya, 'of Bāpuka'. The inscriptions on the next two Buddhas in this row are also visible. Of these the first (fifth from the left) reads: Bhadanta-Bāpukasya, 'of the reverend Bāpuka', and the second (sixth from the left) Bāpukasya, 'of Bāpuka'. Both are written within a petal of the lotus seat.

4-5. On the same wall in this cave are found in two places writings in yellow pigment in fairly big letters (Pl. VIIIa-b). The script belongs to the nail-headed variety, but it is far too effaced to ensure satisfactory reading.

<sup>1</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 87, No. 27 and pl.; see also *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 138, No. 15, para. 2.

<sup>2</sup> This syllable is superfluous. Indrajī reads *ye-stu*. Though it can be so read from Burgess's plate, the form of this compound letter is slightly different in the original inscription.

<sup>3</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 87, No. 27 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 138, No. 15 and pl. LIX.

<sup>4</sup> This portion within square brackets is now lost.

<sup>5</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 87, No. 25 and pl.; *A. S. W. I.*, vol. iv, p. 138, No. 14 and pl. LIX. See also plate illustrated above.



## APPENDIX

6. On the back of the veranda, to the right of the entrance, there are a few names painted in black on painted figures (Pl. VIIIc-e). The scene illustrates the well-known Viśvantara (Pāli, Vessantara) Jātaka. The names that are clear read Vaiśvantaraḥ and Indraḥ. Of the third name only one syllable is preserved which reads *yu* and apparently, when complete, contained the name of Yujaka (Jūjaka of the Pāli Jātaka story), the avaricious Brahman who came to ask for the son and daughter of Vaiśvantara to be his slaves. It may be noticed here that Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* does not give the name of this Brahman. It is therefore likely that the story illustrated in this cave was from a different version, akin to that found in the Pāli Jātaka. It is also to be noted that while Āryaśūra calls this prince Viśvantara, the name given here is Vaiśvantara; which is the correct Sanskrit form of Pāli Vessantara. This Sanskrit reading would also show that the derivation of the name according to the Pāli version from Vessa (Sanskrit, Vaiśya) is fanciful and unwarranted.

## CAVE XVII

Two painted inscriptions of this cave have been noticed by Burgess.<sup>1</sup>

1. Below the figure of a Yaksha (Mañibhadra) at the left end of the veranda (Pl. IX a).  
Mañibhadraḥ
2. On painted figures in a scene illustrating the Śibi-Jātaka story, at the right end of the front aisle of the hall, the name Śibirājā is found in three places below the figure of a king (representing Śibi), twice on the right wall of the front corridor and once on the left wall of the corridor (Pl. IX b-c). Burgess notices the name of Indra occurring in two places, but this name cannot be traced now.
3. Besides these there is one inscription in two lines in red paint and cursive writing on the left wall of the front corridor (Pl. IX d). The reading of the inscription is not certain, but it seems to mention a name. The writing appears to be of about the 7th century A.D. The following tentative reading is suggested :
  - 1 Śrī Ru (Bha?) māṇamāṇāvapaukagai . deva
  - 2 vidushā chaṇḍa-

No sense can, however, be made of this.
4. There is a similar inscription on the back wall of the veranda, to the left of a small door (Pl. IX e). The writing is in the same cursive hand and seems to have contained the same name as before, as the syllables *śrī* and *pauka*, which are quite legible, would show.

<sup>1</sup> *Descriptive Notes*, p. 87, Nos. 28 and 29.



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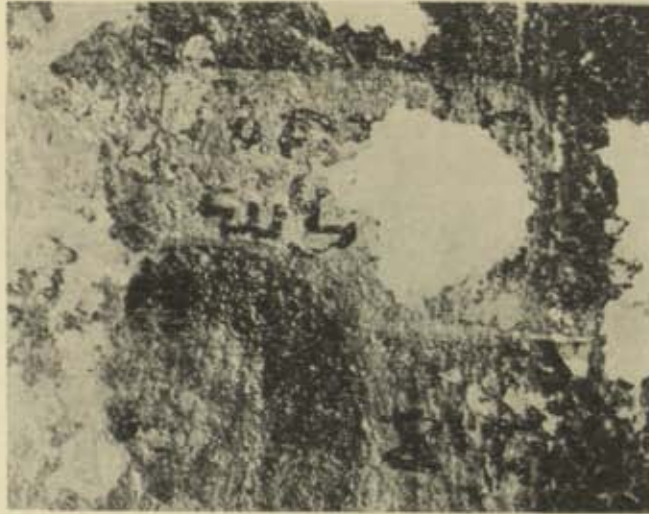
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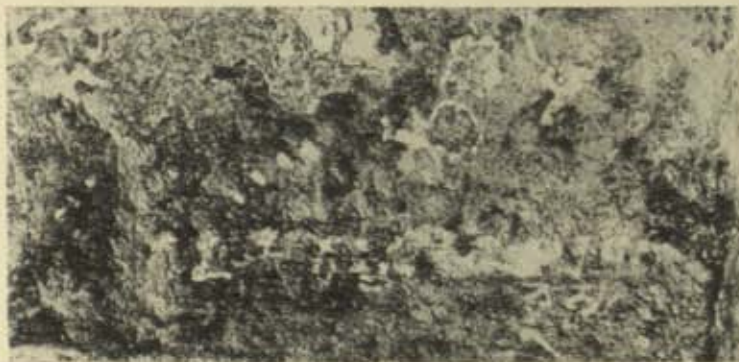




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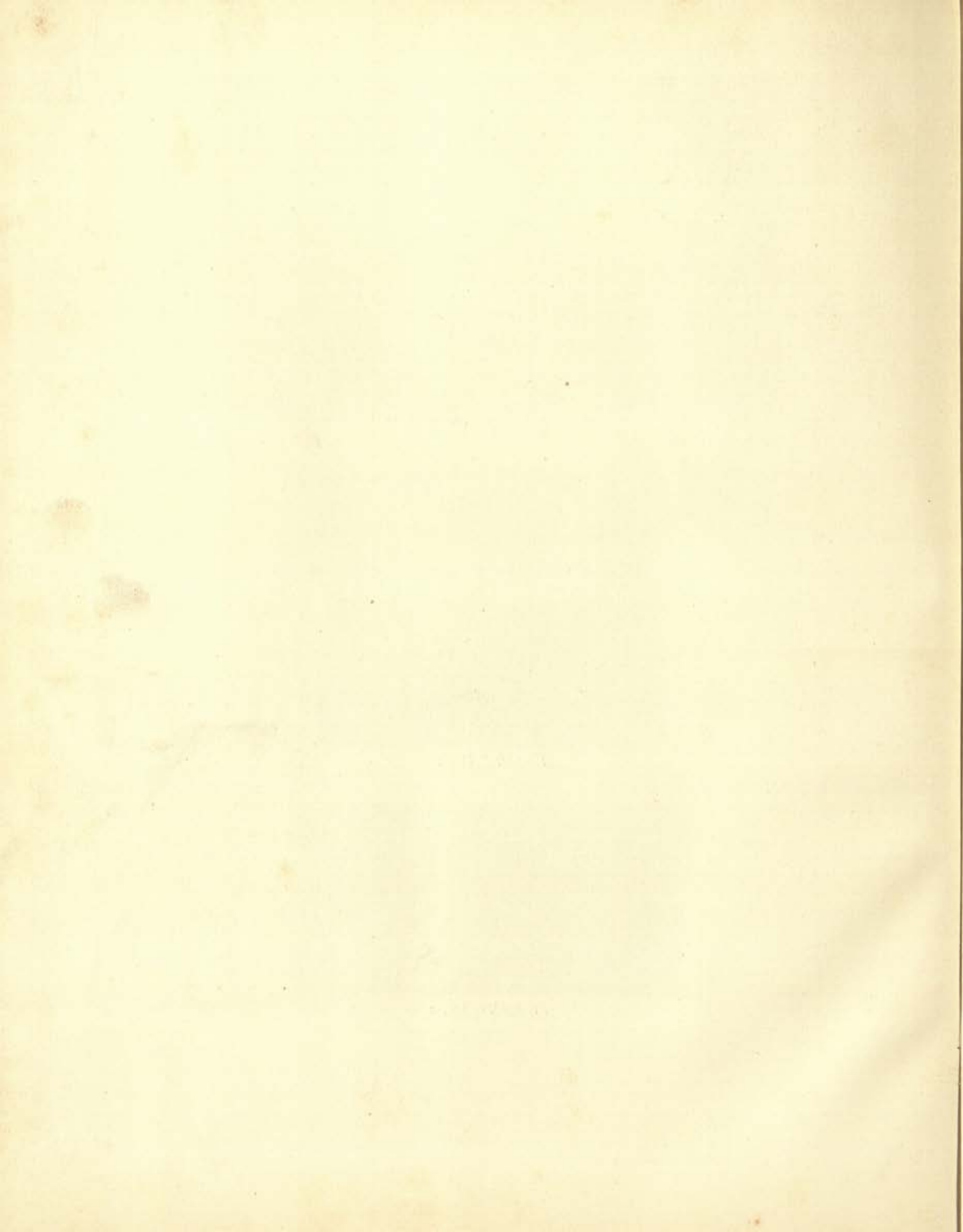


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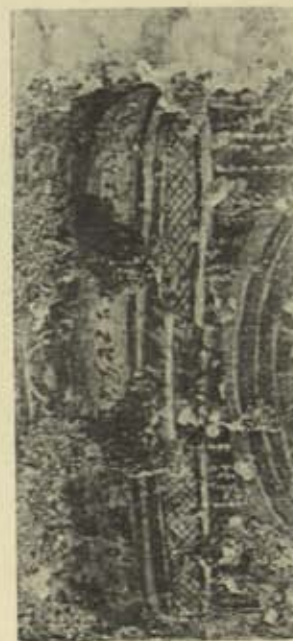
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(c) CAVE IX, 6









(a) CAVE X, 1



(b) THE SAME



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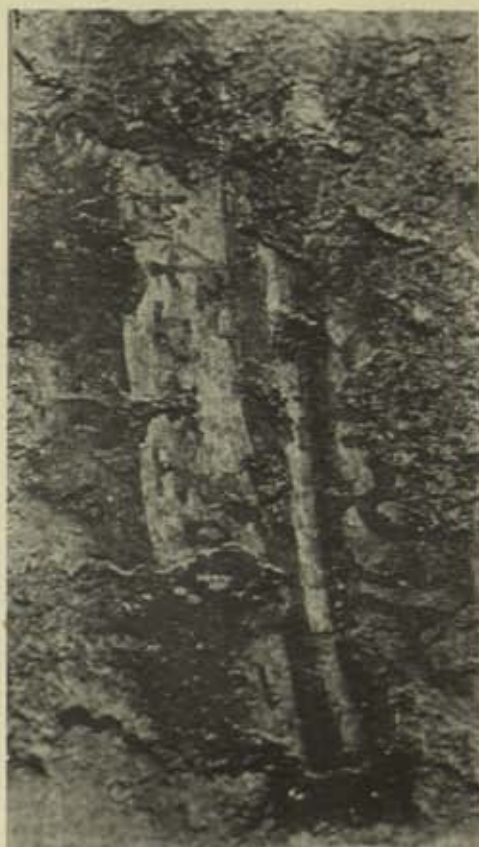




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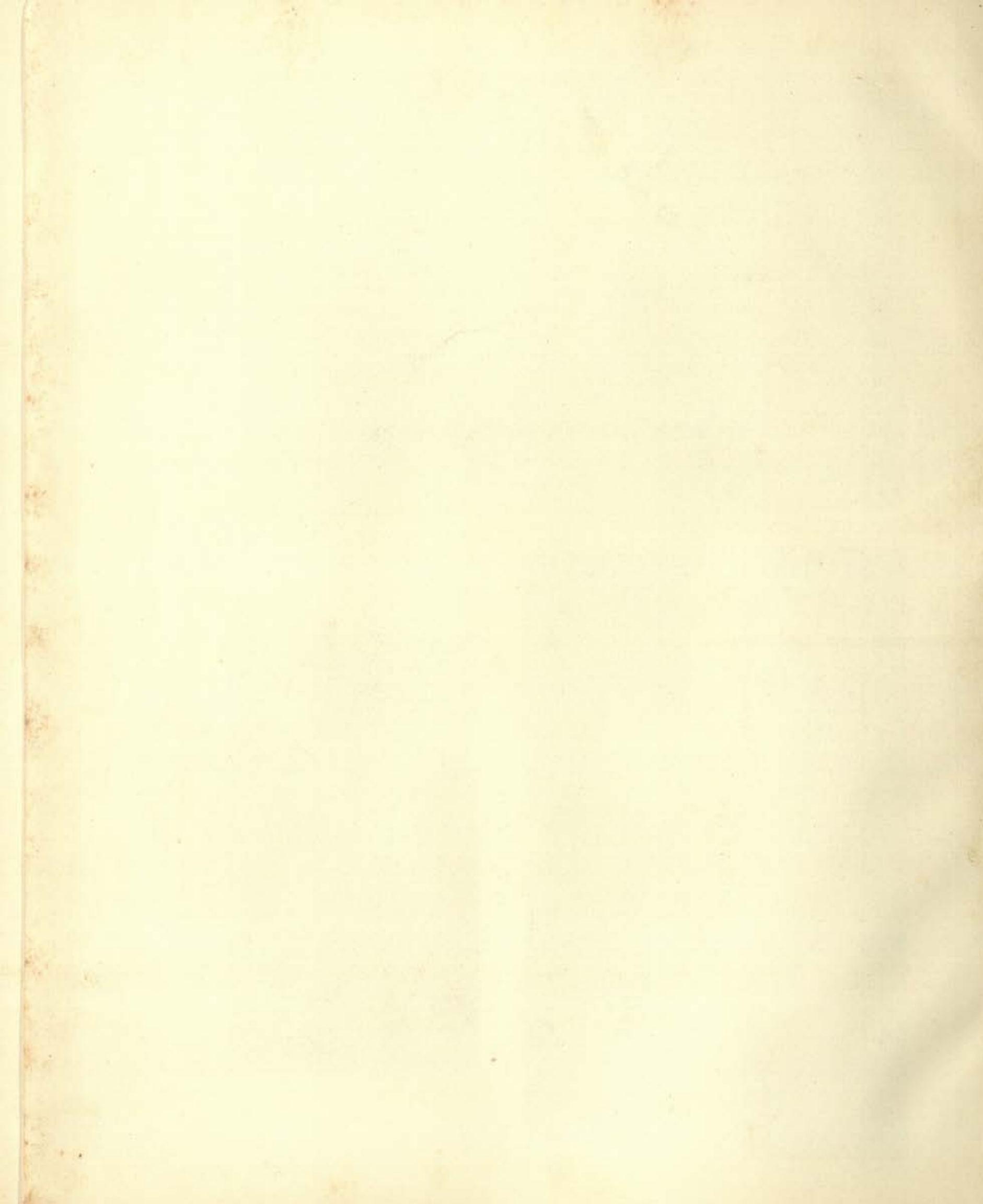


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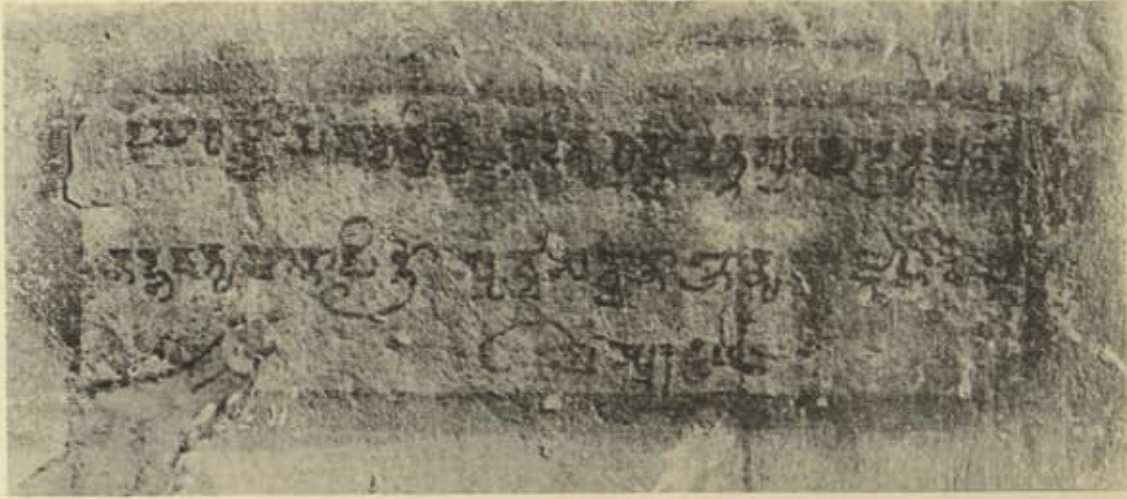


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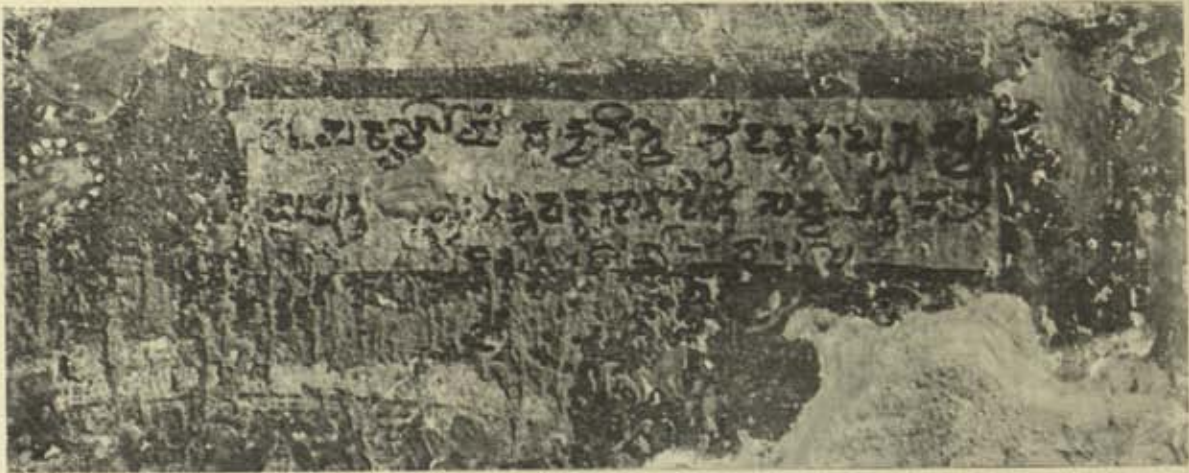




(a) CAVE XVI, 1



(b) CAVE XVI, 2



(c) CAVE XVI, 3









(a) CAVE XVI, 4



(b) CAVE XVI, 5



(c) CAVE XVI, 6 (i)



(d) CAVE XVI, 6 (ii)



(e) CAVE XVI, 6 (iii)









(a) CAVE XVII, 1



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